Encounter

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER & MELVIN J. LASKY

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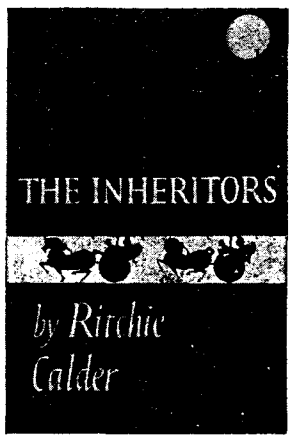

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Cyril Connolly

Beyond Believing

I HAVE REACHED an age at which I am sometimes asked what I believe. The question invariably confounds me. Before I can reply the mind panics as when, in a free association test, it is given the word "lake"—lake, hake, fake, crimson-lake, *"Delacroix, lac de sang hanté des mauvaises anges"*—deep sleep: and at the thought of that eternal sleep (better lake than never) I linger delectably over the word: reaction time twenty-five seconds. So, like La Fontaine, I believe in sleep: the time spent in sleep (the time when we are out of trouble) is not charged to our account but is handed back to us in later life to use as we please: sleep and its stealthy approaches: daydream, doze, siesta, garlic's blackjack; wine's persuasion; the phrase dimming on the page, the book falling from the hand; these are reservoirs of perennial youth and therefore all but sacred. "Death will come on swift wings to him who disturbs the sleep of the Pharaoh" (Inscription on Tutankhamen's tomb).

Sleep first then, and secondly, Irresponsibility. And by irresponsibility I mean the refusal to accept any obligations as a social animal, as well as a mere European, Englishman, or good citizen.

> "Hippocleides, a young Athenian chosen by Cleisthenes of Sicyon as husband for his daughter. At the final banquet Hippocleides not only insisted on dancing, but even stood on his head on the table and waved his legs in the air. Cleisthenes was disgusted and cried, 'O son of Pisander, you have danced away your marriage.' The young man smiled and said, 'Hippocleides don't care,' which became a proverb." (Lemprière's Classical Dictionary.)

A proverb which we too seldom hear, when the talk is all of Atlas; of shouldering burdens and responsibilities, of fulfilling trusts and missions, carrying out our obligations as a great power, great debtor, etc., and meeting new crises, sternly facing facts. What are these facts? That modern man, and in particular, Western man, and above all, European man has become mortally involved in a web of duties and sanctions, of social, emotional, and intellectual obligations. Knowledge desires to be known and the task of the living is to acquire it. The past refuses to let itself be obliterated at the old pace. Consider the London Record Office, the newspaper files of the British Museum, the wills and codicils of Somerset House, the multiplication of microfilm: then compare for one moment the life of man with that of an African elephant, which lives for about the same span. How much knowledge will the elephant, wisest of beasts, require in its eighty years? Of what to eat, what not to eat, of where to go, where not to go.

CONSIDER THE SAVAGES who surround such elephants—pygmies, Azande, and the like—they need to learn only a little more, a few crafts and skills, hunting methods, songs and dances, tribal traditions, witch doctors' beliefs. But an educated Western European begins to be crammed at the age of three; he must go to school, learn to read and write, acquire Latin and French, history, science, economics, mathematics, draw a map of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, know the purchasing power of the mark in the reign of King John, or the logistics of a Roman legion; his I.Q. is graded at four-and-a-half, endless examinations and probably two years

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of military service await him, then a lifetime of ferocious competition and financial liabilities, until, at rest in the tax-free grave (though even graves must be kept up), he hands on the burden to his loved ones in the form of posthumous debts and death-duties. I have left out the particular responsibilities of each country as the custodian of its national glories or protector of other peoples; I remark only on my travels that ignorance is bliss and that the happiest people would be the least organised, except that no one will let them alone. I think Freud in his *Civilisation and its Discontents* understood the root of the trouble when he remarked that the State is more anal-erotic (mean, tidy, obstinate, and grasping) than the individuals who compose it. We inherit the passions of bygone bureaucracy, we have created even in our least corrupt institutions (inland revenue, customs and excise, probate, etc.) non-human cancerous growths, benignant tumours which oppress our society. The living cannot breathe because the dead refuse to die. A packet of old love-letters turns up in the attic —a delicious theme for a novel. But I have seen such attics slope downstairs; I have watched a fine dinner party ruined as a coprolithic flow of old stamp catalogues, imperfect collections of mosses and minerals, of pedigrees of racehorses, time-tables, bus tickets, score-cards, or boxes of brass cowbells, Welsh postcards, and legless Swiss bears, piles up against the door and pelts like a rain of lapilli on stricken host and guests, dispelling the aroma of cigars and brandy, of roses and red wine, in a dusty fæcal miasma of hereditary hoarding. It is to early Christian art, according to Malraux, that we owe the first wonderful portraits of old men; the Jeromes, Augustines and Gregorys no longer merely serene, their wise old faces furrowed with the consciousness of sin and suffering. Hippocleides must dance them away.

*

The universe spells death with a small "d"
Disdains proud "I" yet sanctions little me....

THE NATURAL condition of created things I hold to be one of undiluted ecstasy. Self-consciousness is the consequence of some imperceptible deviations in biological process, a deviation spreading like a ladder in a stocking, which cannot now be halted.

Very small organisms have no fear or knowledge of death which, in a cell, is synonymous with parturition, and quite large organisms have no feeling of pain. It was not obligatory that there should be any disturbance of the primal ecstasy according to whether one ate or was eaten. The plankton barges into the Whale's open jaws as the Tunnel of Love. The indifference to death of some large creatures like turkeys and camels remains otherwise inexplicable. "Man has created death" because he has watched man die. Even so, assuming that natural, even violent death could be part of our ecstasy as human beings, or that our awareness of it can add meaning and poetry to life, such noble exits can only be the reward of a Sophocles or Goethe, for in our time and place so full a life, the slow, simultaneous ripening and ultimate rotting of mind with body, is seldom attainable. The happiest creatures are those which live out their brief existence in instinctive harmony with the universe, unconscious of their role in it. But since self-consciousness has arisen, we must stake all on developing it to the ultimate moment when we shall have completely understood our environment, since to understand may be to change it, to find a way of reducing death (so nearly a blessing, and the source of all our dignity and tragedy) to something we can bear. Self-consciousness, which begins with the awareness of death, may end with its elimination. And here we have certain indications that we are on a likely path.

I BELIEVE IN TWO wholly admirable human activities, guilt-free, unpunished, two ends in themselves rewarding: the satisfaction of curiosity (acquirement of knowledge) and the mating of like minds (friendship and mutual attraction) with the apprehension of beauty in so far as it be not included in the other two. It is impossible to undertake any kind of research without being perpetually made aware that the truth is plying us with

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suggestions, the past prodding us with hints, and that if the results of such assistance be not miraculous, it is not the fault of our heavenly helpers but of our all too human obtuseness. Who wrote *Kubla Khan*? We now know what books Coleridge had read; everything that was in his mind—but we know also how completely incapable he was, in normal conditions, of making use of such knowledge. Setting this impotent polymath to a constructive task, forcing an entrance into his cranium, the divine ecstasy (inspiration) flowed in, reassembled the metaphysical jigsaw into the greatest poetry to which the sodden organism could be attuned, then broke the reverie. With all the help of inspiration we can do only a little better than our best.

THE MATING OF LIKE MINDS is often expressed by the meeting of bodies, and I would like to include both under the heading of mutual attraction—but with full physical union on the one hand or long-standing friendship on the other a whole new set of obligations arise. I refer only to the phenomenon of "getting off" with someone, to the magical moment when we are neither hurt nor bored, when the letters in a name spin its anagram, when a handshake proclaims the return of Ulysses and a look can awaken the hyacinth of unborn springs. Sometimes these two profound and unpunished sensations are blended, especially when we are studying the past lives of old artists and writers, for then knowledge and love coincide and the dead whom we have exhumed are reincarnated by the imagination.

Here one is greatly helped by such things as association copies and if an attachment to these be sentimental, there is no greater sentimentalist than I, for I believe that communication with dead writers becomes particularly intense when one is reading their marginal annotations, their note-books or letters. Good criticism is a form of spiritualism, but the medium must possess the facts, not a lock of hair. The living denigrate the dead; they must or else they would be dominated by them, but the handwriting of a dead man still retains something of his bygone arrogance. The Past, of course, is the natural subject of literature, though many writers ignore this, or, to put it another way, it is what Time does to Action that is our particular province. Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Flaubert, Proust, they all climbed under the tent. At five, ten, twenty, fifty, one hundred, or one thousand years ago, according to each writer, a point of maximum intensity was reached on which imagination could focus, and so marinate people and events to perfection.

DO I BELIEVE in Art? If life be an ecstasy there is nothing to say but "Alleluia," if that ecstasy be lost what can Art do to re-live it? And here we discover the weakness of any such word as belief. In the last analysis, at the moment when the bullet sears the flesh, when the plane plummets or the anæsthetic counts me out, can I really claim to believe in anything but panic and self-pity? No. Then how can I believe in Art? Or Liberty?

"Give me liberty or give me death"—does it mean any more than "give me Leamington or give me Bath?" In the ultimate crisis, to those without religious faith, surely all belief seems equally absurd? In moments of acute sea-sickness or in that extraordinary onset of semi-consciousness known as being "taken ill" there is simply nothing or nobody but seems ridiculous and sinister, indifferent or hostile. I still suffer from occasional attacks of claustrophobia in lifts and crowded theatres and before the invisible hand starts throttling me—"fugitive from some just doom"—I receive an alarming impression of having walked into an enemy ambush. In those seconds on the edge of panic, all my values collapse and crumble into common absurdity. One might argue that these are moments of irrational fear and that one might feel differently at the long-expected onset of death, when resignation replaces anxiety, "on some fond breast the parting soul relies," and I hope that it is true, but I still think there should be one word for believing in art as I believe in it, in

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the sense in which we say, "I believe in colonic irrigation," and another for the faith of patriots and martyrs.

"Would you die for your country?"

"I have so many countries."

"Would you die for Queen and country?"

"Not if I could help it. I regard it as my duty to cling to consciousness until the last possible moment."

"Duty to yourself?"

"Duty to my consciousness."

"As an artist?"

"Certainly."

"As an artist, forgive me, you don't write much?"

"And I compose, paint, sculpt even less, but I am an artist all the same."

"What then is Art?"

"Art is the conscious apprehension of the unconscious ecstasy of all created things."

IT IS ONE PROCESS to perceive this ecstasy, another to be able to communicate it. Once perceived in terms of human consciousness, we set this ecstasy against man's knowledge of his fate and engender an attitude either of acceptance or rebellion, realist or romantic. I believe in the supreme importance, virtue, and necessity of this process, for the history of Art is the chronicle of such human achievements as have approached nearest to perfection, of the elixir of humanity. This, I think, explains the homogeneity of genius; constantly, when we read of the childhood and adolescence of men of genius we are struck by how alike they are, by their effortless technical mastery of their medium at an early age, their precocious feats of memory, of understanding of adult states, above all, by the immense richness of imagery in a writer like Keats, of melody in a composer like Mozart, which reveal their immediate insight into this blissful universal harmony.

I DO NOT believe in original sin, but as a mythological statement of the human condition it seems painfully true. The fall, and the likelihood of going on falling, explains far more to me than the idea of progress and perfectibility; we have a bias to ruin, an itch for self-destruction; our moments of ecstasy are sometimes intolerable and must be blotted out. The heart rusts, the soul silts up. I cannot accept this back-sliding as a theological fact, but I feel it may be biologically or physically correct, that in bodies the process of ageing may instigate cruelty, lethargy, betrayal quite automatically; and I have remarked that any physical rejuvenation in myself—a slimming cure, a ski-ing holiday, a walking tour, even high altitudes in an aeroplane, induces a corresponding re-adaptation of belief, an impulse to universal love which endures till former conditions, over-eating, over-talking, over-competing, flu and fatigue, reassert themselves, and the concept of love as the key and purpose to everything, the condition of the upper atmosphere, is once more enfeebled by the terrestrial envelope and the struggle for existence.

Even the lightness and brightness of all the materials connected with aeroplanes seem to point to a more light-hearted and light-headed way of life. The smiling air hostess is the archaic Greek *Κορη* in the Temple courtyard, the reassuring captain is the young bearded Zeus. In the air books seem inappropriate, the ectoplasm of the earthbound.

I HAVE ALWAYS been fascinated by the study of climate and in particular by its relationship to art. On the whole, art is a sun-substitute—perpetual sunshine casts out art. Where are the art centres of the world? New York, Boston, Chicago, London, Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Munich, and Berlin, all with long winters. There is hardly any great painting south of Rome or Madrid, and an interesting map could be made of the concentration of genius, of the southern limit of antique shops, or easel painting (at what point does it become too hot to have pictures on the walls?) of good bookshops even. I noticed in the Tropics that European poetry only became significant just before it was going to rain and that incidentally it was no longer possible, owing to humidity or white ants, to enjoy fine bindings or first editions. Air-conditioning may increase the yield from warm places, even as central heat-

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ing has pushed the creative limit northward, but the fact remains that if I were to say "I believe in Art," I would really mean, "I believe that in certain physical states (not extremes of pain, fear, lust, or ecstasy) the literature, painting, music, architecture, sculpture produced between latitudes 40 and 60 in the last two thousand years under seasonal conditions can justify existence to me while I also live between latitudes 40 and 60, and am subject to a similar awareness of the seasons."

I HAVE NOTICED that Indians and Africans who spend some time in Europe very quickly assimilate European art, which is not a racial but a geographical product; they take to it like their umbrellas. All art, then, is relative, but the artist is eternal and if I could only be sure I were one it would not matter what else I believed. But only one part is an artist; another wishes to be remembered as a lover, a sage, or a scholar, or simply an endurer, one who stayed to the end.

WHAT YEATS wrote of Wilde, that "because of all that half-civilised blood in his veins he could not endure the sedentary toil of creative art" is true of most of us. Flaubert's day or indeed any other day spent between library and desk will often be felt a day wasted, even as the sensation of movement, the most pointless journey, will always seem valid by its combination of thought and action, of mobility with the indulgence of curiosity. An archæologist's life seems to me among the most admirable. I believe that it is still possible for him to make discoveries of such significance that they may serve to put humanity back on the right path, discoveries about primitive Christianity or the nature of Egyptian and Greek religion, lost books of Sappho and the Greek dramatists, Petronius, Tacitus, Livy, the *catalogue raisonné* of the Alexandrian library (I regard the burning of the Alexandrian library as an inconsolable personal loss) or of buried works of art which will come to light in our time because we are so desperately in need of them.

ANOTHER PROFESSION I particularly admire is the Doctor's, above all the specialist in mental diseases who works on the frontier between psychology and the physiology of the brain, and I envy diplomats and Special Correspondents, for they are nomads without guilt. The capitalist, I mean the true capitalist, who lives by and through the manipulation of his capital, is also a free man after my own heart and when he combines great undertakings with a passion for the arts I feel he is to be ranked only a little lower than the artist himself, with Maecenas or the Medici, the princely builders, like the Popes, and *Fermiers Généraux*. And yet what a miserable man is the artist, with his vanity and envy, servility and egotism—and how much more miserable the capitalist who so seldom does anything for the living and competes for the prestige of the Past with rival collectors. If I were asked to name some characteristics typical of the mid-20th century, I would put the uncritical worship of money, the spread of nationalism, the tyranny of the orgasm, the homosexual protest and the apotheosis of snobbery. Money, sex, and social climbing motivate society.

NEVER HAVE THE RICH lived so inconspicuously for themselves or done so little for other people—or been so rich for that matter, for I do not count the various altruistic tax-evasion schemes, the trusts, foundations, and municipal galleries which are now the rage, a form of giving away money which the state has already ear-marked, that permits the minimum human contact and plants on other shoulders the onus of discrimination. The ideal rich man of to-day is ideally mean, saving every sixpence for his posthumous trust, rather than personally rewarding a poet or a painter, and purchasing only an occasional farm, or a piece of Cromwellian silver, or an Impressionist like Sisley who is dead yet not altogether in the museums. Often he is homosexual and a snob about everything as well (though seldom a nationalist), and invariably an amateur painter or writer who is jealous of his colleagues, though eager to pick their brains. He paints best in winter,

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at Nassau, when all the other painters are in bed with flu, and writes most in summer, in his beach house. He no longer is privately printed, but obtains very good terms. For money has emerged twin victor from the 20th-century wars—money for the Haves and Nationalism for the Have-nots. Never has wealth held so many attractions or provided such a sanction for the good life, for the whole texture of living is altered for those who possess it. Money need no longer clog the mind and coarsen the sensibility. It provides an extra dimension. The rich can travel light, at last, airborne from one æsthetic experience to another; they dodge the winter, the wear and tear of sedentary toil, of families and fidelity, they are as remote from us as the cuckoo during the seven months when he is away. Only people engrossed in their work or who are perpetually in love can ignore this mobility.

So AN ALTERNATIVE WAY of putting the question would be to say, is there anything you yourself believe in more than money, sex, or social climbing? Or nationalism? Any belief which enables you to contemplate without envy or inferiority the masters of life in this most luxurious of possible worlds? Here again I turn to my well-worn trumps (1) the artist (and I would add the saint and the mystic if I knew more about them), (2) the lover, and (3) the joker, Hippocleides. Them and only them the capitalist cannot buy, the nationalist inflame, or the snob deflate. They remain what the ancient Egyptians called "true of voice."

BUT THERE must be something else! Looking out of my garden window at the tall poplars and the Down beyond, listening to the confident squawk of an autumnal pheasant, the *fin-de-saison* stridency of the lawn-mower, I am linked by my consciousness to the world of natural living of which for more than fifty years I have formed a part. Has this half-century of self-speculation given me nothing to affirm, nothing to render my leaving of the world of more consequence than the mowing of the grass, the shooting of a pheasant, the felling of a tree? *"Un homme au rêve habitué"* he died while still uncertain of the divinity of Jesus or the identity of Shakespeare, a sceptic of whom we can proudly write: *"Mort sur le champ d'ennui!"*

"We must live this life," answer Hippocleides and Voltaire, "as if every minute were precious except the last—a bad quarter of an hour about which we can do nothing." *"Supportons la vie qui n'est pas grand'chose et méprisons la mort qui n'est rien de tout."*

"Every third thought shall be the grave," counters Prospero, "you have perhaps ten, perhaps twenty years to prepare. Let every activity be subject to that end! Make a good death!"

"Consider a child," says Hippocleides. "What does everyone require of a baby? That it should eat well, sleep well, and laugh. Who wants to tell it of sorrow or fear, of death and disease, of sin and suffering? Children are our guests in the world and we must entertain them as well as we can and spare them the inconvenience of our mortal condition, as we would a visitor from another planet. And surely what we would for them is right for us?"

I HAVE LEFT OUT one phenomenon besides the search for truth and the obsession with the form and shaping of a work of art—the devotion which is distilled, after years, from all the possessive kinds of love, which may have originated in boredom, unhappiness, habit, or lust, from an accident of fusion that creates something profound and selfless ("the giving which plays us least false") like the love of a parent for a child which yet keeps something of the child about it—a positive permanent illusion, a projection of lost early loves on to one person. In the field of discovery and the world of love miracles still happen. The presence of one of these long-suffering accomplices in our last act of existence may help to ease us out of it, or, when all those whom we have truly loved are dead, they may suffice to tip the scales for death, until dying becomes a renewal of communication with them. The rest is mineral emptiness.

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P. M. S. Blackett

Critique of Some Contemporary Defence Thinking

THE IMPACT on Western opinion of the Soviet A-bomb in 1949, the H-bombs in 1953–54, and the Sputnik in 1957 acted as a powerful stimulus to new thought on the fundamental bases of Western foreign and military policy. After a gradual start, the output of articles and books rose rapidly to a veritable flood. The main authors are either academic civilians writing in their spare time, or civilians working full-time in special institutes, often attached to universities.

The writings of these civilian military analysts contain many wise and highly relevant studies of the problems raised by nuclear weapons: however, some of them contain some conclusions which seem to me wrong and dangerous. I propose to examine some of these conclusions in detail. Before doing so, however, I will make a few remarks on the analytic methods by which these complex problems of nuclear war can be approached. As no large-scale nuclear war has ever occurred, there is no body of operational data on real events on which to base a common-sense analysis, such as was available to the Operational Research Groups attached to the Services during the long-drawn-out operations of the last war. It is difficult, therefore, to avoid using some type of theoretical approach, in which the vast complexities of the real world are at first set aside and an attempt is made to construct a simplified model which will represent the real problem in as many essentials as possible. When such a model has been set up, either verbal or mathematical arguments are used to deduce conclusions on points of practical importance.

The essential difficulty of this method is to know whether the model which has been constructed is sufficiently like the real events which it purports to represent to allow conclusions which have much relevance to executive action. When a highly simplified model has to be used, any prediction made by its use is likely to be so uncertain that it is essential to check it against the conclusions reached in a more intuitive manner by attempting to envisage the situation as a whole.

One of the most important lessons, which the war-time operational research groups had to learn, was that there were only a few problems, perhaps only one-tenth, where they could add something useful to the decisions arrived at by the trained Services staffs through the exercise of their traditional military judgment and wisdom. This small fraction arose because in most operations the staff themselves got the right answers, or because there was not enough factual data of past operations to extrapolate from, or because the operations proposed by the staffs were too novel to allow realistic predictions of the likely results. It is thus clear that the work of the operational research groups was an addition to, and not a substitute for, the exercise by the trained staffs of conventional military wisdom.

In the present world of nuclear plenty, when both Western and Soviet blocs have the power to destroy each other many times over, it is clear that, to a degree never before equalled in history, there can be no military policy independent of both home and foreign policy. Thus any purely military analysis will almost certainly leave out of account some vital factors and so can lead to fallacious results. Again, just because the life of a nation is involved, any military analysis which leads to definite recommenda-

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tions for decisions must be readily intelligible to the political and military leaders who have the responsibility for executive action. It would be almost true to say that in the field of major strategy, as opposed to weapons design and tactics, the only good arguments are simple arguments. If they are not simple, they will not be generally understood and so no action should be taken on them.

Because of the essential complexity of real events, many of the most important decisions of war have necessarily to rest on rough calculation. It is certainly a duty of an operational research group to help the staffs to improve on these, but when they cannot, they should keep silent: never should they fall into the trap of decking out what is essentially only a hunch with a pseudo-scientific backing.

When I come to study in detail some of the arguments of these new military writers about nuclear war, I will necessarily have to adopt many aspects of their own methods and terminology, that is, I will have to meet them on the methodological ground of their own choosing. I want therefore to apologise in advance for the nauseating inhumanity of much of what I will have to say.

"Delicate Balance of Terror"

I WILL START by discussing some aspects of the influential article "The Delicate Balance of Terror" by Albert Wohlstetter of the Rand Corporation, published in *Foreign Affairs* in January 1959. This contains many cogent arguments and analyses, but it also contains at least one important conclusion which I believe to be fallacious. A key part of the arguments rests on the enormous advantage which it is alleged the possession of thermonuclear weapons gives to an aggressor. Other writers who take a similar view are Klaus Knorr and Oscar Morgenstern of Princeton University, Herman Kahn and Bernard Brodie of the Rand.

Mr. Wohlstetter starts by listing a large number of people who in one way or another have stated the view that the present nuclear balance is relatively stable against rational acts by America or Russia. He then sets out to refute this view and to substitute for it the thesis that the stability was then in 1959 very precarious, in fact more so than previously, and that, unless very drastic steps are taken, will be still more precarious in a few years' time.

Though there are many acute statements and much quoting of the details of numbers of weapons and their performance, etc., there is little attempt to envisage realistically the whole situation which would arise in the event of the present balance being really unstable. Instead one finds a number of verbal statements, some of which I will analyse in detail, and which are explicitly directed towards reversing the commonly held view, which, in his own words, "would make aggression irrational or even insane." As we will see, Wohlstetter puts much emphasis on the circumstances in which nuclear aggression would be, in his view, both rational and sane.

Let us look at the verbal statement of the alleged enormous advantage to the aggressor in the light of some numerical figures, which may be plausibly assumed to have some relation to the reality of the present strategic nuclear balance between the Western and Soviet blocs. I will start with a highly simplified abstract model and then bring in step by step some additional features.

SUPPOSE FIRSTLY that two major and similar hypothetical countries can inflict 100 million deaths on each other by an all-out attack on the other's population, and secondly, that if either launches a surprise attack on the enemy's retaliatory force, it can destroy the high fraction of 90 per cent of it. Then the victim's counter-blow against the aggressor's cities will amount to 10 per cent of what it otherwise would be, so that the retaliation will only inflict 10 million deaths on the aggressor.

If, however, anything goes wrong with the preparations for this surprise attack, so that the intention to strike becomes known to the intended victim, the latter will be likely to make a forestalling blow with everything it has, directed against both cities and retaliatory forces; this would, in our model, produce 100 million killed. If, on the other hand, the aggressor does not strike at all, there will be no reason to suppose that he will be attacked —at any rate, not then.

So, at any rate, in the short run, the political leaders of the potential aggressor have to make the choice between not attacking, and so having no killed, and of attacking successfully, and so having 10 million killed, and attacking unsuccessfully, that is, losing surprise, and so having 100 million killed. In this simple numerical model, the aggressor could hardly be considered sane if it made such an aggression. If now

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one works through this model with a variety of different numerical assumptions, the enormous advantage the aggressor would gain by making a nuclear attack still seems a bit elusive.

For instance, suppose, to take an extreme case, that the aggressor could hope to destroy 99 per cent of the enemy's retaliatory forces, then the result of the three possible eventualities mentioned above could be 0, 1 and 100 mega-deaths respectively. However, no military planners would ever expect to pull off such a fantastically successful first strike.

ALTERNATIVELY, let us go back to our 90 per cent assumption but suppose that the aggressor's nuclear strength was five times that of his victim so as to allow him to inflict 100 mega-deaths, but that as his enemy is only one-fifth as strong, his full retaliatory capacity would kill only 20 million. Then in this eventuality, no attack, successful attack and unsuccessful attack, would lead to 0, 2 and 20 mega-deaths respectively.

The above calculations underestimate the destruction suffered by the aggressor in the case of a successful first strike, because the victim country is likely to concentrate its remaining retaliatory force against the most worthwhile target, for instance, the big cities. Because of this, the casualties suffered by the aggressor might be as much as twice as high as indicated above.

Actually I have made my first model look much too favourable to the aggressor. For I have spoken as if its High Command could be *certain* to reduce the enemy's retaliatory power to 10 per cent of its initial capacity, so as to be able to inflict only 10 million deaths on the aggressor. However, they could not be certain of this. All that the aggressor's operational analysts could justifiably conclude would be that 10 million would be the probable number, but that the essential uncertainties of such an operation and of the calculations would not exclude the possibility that it might reach, say, 30 million or more.

Even this is too favourable to the aggressor. For, consider the nature of the intelligence about the enemy's retaliation force which its High Command would have to rely on to make the calculation which I have assumed leads to 10 million as the most probable number. How could their Intelligence Service obtain sufficiently reliable and up-to-date information of all the multitude of facts necessary for a successful first strike? The whereabouts of every long-range bomber, the location of every missile site, the deployment of all medium-range fighter bombers with nuclear warheads—all would be needed, accurate up to the last hour. Aircraft aloft would clearly be immune to attack. It must not be forgotten that 100 fighter bombers, perhaps flying low, armed with normal A-bombs, could, if they reached their city targets, kill 5 to 10 million people.

Wohlstetter expresses a qualitative truism when he writes: "A totalitarian country can preserve secrecy about the capabilities and dispositions of his forces very much better than a Western democracy." Can it, however, do this well enough? Is there no chance of there being a few dissident individuals, amongst tens of millions of people, who would notice the not inconsiderable preparations for such a massive operation as a first strike? Would any country seriously contemplate initiating a first strike, which would bring an expected 10 mega-deaths from the counter blow, without the slightest preparation or warning to its civil defence authorities? Consider the half-million tourists from the various Soviet countries, and the many thousands from the West, who visit the U.S.S.R. every year. Could the Soviet authorities be sure that there were no foreign agents among these? How could they exclude the possibility of a Western agent penetrating their high councils as successfully as their agent, Richard Sorge, did those of Japan for so many years?

The aggressor's enemy might be an "open" country, but this does not mean that the aggressor's agents would be left free to radio back every hour all the latest military movements. Intelligence from orbiting satellites or high-flying aircraft could be neither reliable enough nor comprehensive enough to be adequate. If a country spent a small fraction of what is now devoted to missile research to systematic camouflage and decoy schemes, it could do much to nullify confidence in satellite or aircraft intelligence. Thus any planned attack on the enemy's retaliatory forces would have to be preceded by a great increase of illicit radio signals from the aggressor's agents. This would certainly alert the enemy, and thus surprise would be lost.

Another point related to this is the time factor in launching a surprise attack against enemy nuclear strength. Manned bombers could not be used, because radar warning would allow the victim country to get its nuclear bombers airborne, so that they would be able to retaliate.

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So a surprise attack would have to be done with missiles. Now the technical problem of launching a few hundred ICBM within a few minutes is severe. To let the firings spread over half an hour or so is to lose surprise and so increase the retaliatory blow.

Let us now turn to another of Wohlstetter's statements "... it takes great ingenuity at any given level of nuclear technology to devise a stable equilibrium." We have seen that when some plausible numerical figures are introduced into the balance of terror, it is clear that no country could make use of even a very substantial degree of nuclear superiority by staging a first strike without incurring a high probability of very heavy destruction. Moreover, this conclusion remains valid for a very wide range of numerical assumptions about the relative size of the nuclear strength of the two contestants. If then the present nuclear balance is rather stable, it follows that only some very big technological change could upset it. What sort of change? I think one can rule out the operational possibility of a near 100 per cent anti-missile and anti-aircraft defence, which would allow the country which had it to attack with impunity another which had not. Improved accuracy of missiles or bigger explosive power at the same weight would make fewer missiles necessary to reduce the enemy's power of retaliation to a given level, but would not alter fundamentally the numerical demonstration already given of the essential insanity of a first-strike policy.

Russian Psychology

I WILL NOW MAKE some comments on Mr. Wohlstetter's views about the effect of Russian history on Russian psychology. He says:

> Russian casualties in World War II were more than 20 million. Yet Russia recovered extremely well from this catastrophe. There are several quite plausible circumstances in the future when the Russians might be quite confident of being able to limit damage to considerably less than this number—they make sensible choices and we do not. On the other hand, the risks of not striking might at some juncture appear very great to the Soviets, involving, for example, disastrous defeat in a peripheral war, loss of key satellites with danger of revolt spreading—possibly to Russia itself—or fear of attack by ourselves. Then, striking first, by surprise, would be a sensible choice for them, and from their point of view the smaller risk.

My first comment is that if the U.S.S.R. were involved in the disastrous situation depicted above, the Western world would be alerted and the utmost dispersal of nuclear carriers would be made, geographical security would be clamped down over large areas and all suspected Soviet agents would be rounded up. So the conditions for a successful surprise attack against Western nuclear forces would be absent. My second comment is that the suggestion that Russia, because she had suffered 20 million casualties in the last war, would willingly act so as to make probable a similar catastrophe seems to conflict with all common sense and all history. The history of Russia, both Tsarist and Soviet, tells of many invasions but few military aggressions. Military caution has been a marked characteristic, even to the point, as in 1941, of nearly fatal playing for time. As a suggested alternative to Wohlstetter's assessment of the influence of Russian history on Russian psychology, I put forward the following. "Any country which has experienced the horror of losing 20 million people in one war is very unlikely to take any avoidable risk of it happening again." I doubt the prediction value of any such verbal statements, but of the two I am sure that mine is nearer the truth. Wohlstetter's argument suggests to me that he has neither thought very deeply or imaginatively about the consequences of the nuclear war, nor has he ever imagined himself in the position of taking the action which he seems to think it sane for the Soviets to take.

In the list of imaginary circumstances which are depicted above as likely to provoke a Soviet strike, there is only one, in my opinion, which has any semblance of reality; this is the fear of an immediate attack by America. Clearly an urgent and major task of the Soviet and American Governments is to find ways of allaying each other's fears about such surprise attacks. In all negotiations towards this important objective, it is essential to start with a realistic view of the technical possibility of achieving a successful one. It is not likely to help the search for ways of reducing the chance of surprise attack to exaggerate greatly its military feasibility.

AS REGARDS the technical question of whether the U.S.S.R. has now, or is likely to have in the near future, a sufficient nuclear superiority to have any chance of making a successful first strike, the evidence is rather clear. For instance Secretary of Defence Thomas S. Gates, said to a House Sub-Committee on

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13th January, 1960: "It is the conclusion of those who have analysed the matter that even a surprise attack by all the missiles the Soviets could muster would not suffice to destroy enough of our retaliatory forces to enable him to make a rational decision to attack." The available evidence makes it certain that, in all-round nuclear strength, the U.S.A. is still markedly stronger than the U.S.S.R.

When Mr. Wohlstetter wrote his articles over two years ago, in 1958, certainly the Soviet nuclear strength was weaker relative to America than it is to-day. Yet his articles gave the impression that he considered the balance of terror to be rather unstable. If he did think it then unstable, there seem only two alternatives: either he must have got wrong information about the relative American and Soviet nuclear strength, or he must have feared that America might under certain circumstances exploit her undoubted over-all superiority to initiate nuclear war.

I want now to draw attention to a revealing sentence in the quotation given above about probable Soviet action. This reads: "*... they make sensible choices and we do not.*"

Since the U.S.A. has certainly an over-all nuclear superiority now, and had a still larger one a few years ago, then Wohlstetter's general argument suggests that it would have been a sane policy for the U.S.A. to have initiated a nuclear attack, but that this was not made, presumably for moral reasons. In any negotiations with the U.S.S.R. about possible surprise attacks, the Western delegation would have to prove to the Russian that there is no possible chance that the moral inhibitions of America would ever weaken, so that it was perfectly safe for the U.S.S.R. to assume that the West would never take Wohlstetter's "sane" action.

This amounts in effect to asking the U.S.S.R. to base its military planning on the West's stated intentions. However, one of the doctrines of the academic theorists is that it is necessary to plan on the basis of the enemy's capability, which one can know, and not on the basis of his intentions which one cannot. Wohlstetter's doctrine seems to be that the West must plan on the enemy's capability, but the U.S.S.R. should plan on the West's intentions. If the Western nations enter discussion on the surprise attack problem, the control of armaments, and disarmament, on the basis of this assumption of asymmetric morality, they are not likely to make much progress.

IT IS, OF COURSE, perfectly correct to bring into the analysis of the global situation the broader considerations of expediency, morality, and common sense. But these broader considerations must be brought in consistently and not arbitrarily just when it suits a particular argument. It is wholly correct that a nation should believe in, and pride itself on, the morality of its behaviour. It is an amiable and common conceit that one's own behaviour is better than that of one's opponent, and it may even be true upon occasion. What is absurd is that we should expect an enemy to base its military policy on our own estimate of our own moral character.

Let us now consider more fully the argument that the present nuclear balance is less stable against rational acts by the two giant Powers than it was a few years ago and that it is likely to get still more unstable in the next few years. During the earlier period, say, 1954 to 1957, which has been often referred to as one of exceptional stability, the U.S.A. had a very large superiority of A-bombs, and of long-range aircraft deployed on dozens of bases around the perimeter of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, the U.S.S.R. could not then counter-attack seriously against America through lack of long-range aircraft. However, it was quite clear that this great relative nuclear superiority of America could not last long, and that therefore the diplomatic power and prestige resulting from it also could not last: so that, if no steps were taken by America, this power and prestige would be reduced. In military history, many wars have had such a preventative character. However, wider considerations, including no doubt moral ones, intervened, and preventative war was not waged. On the other hand, in 1954 A-bombs were very nearly dropped at Dien Bien Phu—it is said that the American National Security Council recommended this, but President Eisenhower rejected it. Thus close came a nuclear war—if only a small one—but with what vast possible consequences!

AGAIN, THE DEEP SHOCK produced by the Sputnik in 1957 could have sparked off a drive in America to take the last possible chance of successful preventative war. This dangerous moment—dangerous, that is, from the viewpoint of all the tenets of the academic practitioners of theoretical warfare—passed. I consider that in both theory and fact the period 1954–57 was the most critical of post-war years. The crisis passed because American wisdom and

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good sense won the day and she did not behave like one of the amoral automata of the theorists.

I have no doubt that the balance of terror is now more stable *against sane actions of rational governments* than it was a few years ago, just because the two sides are nearer equal in nuclear strength. The increase in the number of Soviet missiles has markedly reduced the over-all imbalance but certainly has not yet produced, nor is likely to produce in the near future, a marked imbalance the other way. Both common sense and the more detailed arguments of abstract military theory alike associate stability with near equality of defence capability. They therefore lead to the conclusion that the last few years have been a period of increasing stability against rational government actions. When Wohlstetter reaches the exact opposite conclusion, he does so by negating the conclusions of both common sense and of formal military theory by introducing a large and arbitrary degree of moral asymmetry between the two contestants. By this methodological device the period 1954 to 1957 is held to be a safe period because, though America had a large nuclear superiority, she was pacific, while the present time is dangerous because this superiority is less and the U.S.S.R. is aggressive.

The introduction of assumption of moral asymmetry into military arguments is full of pitfalls. Against the assumed moral superiority of the West, weight should be given to the very close integration of military and political policy in Soviet theory and practice. This implies that the probable consequences on the world situation of any proposed act will be carefully thought out.

If a man from Mars studied the history of the last few decades, what conclusion would he come to about the likelihood of East or West staking everything on a nuclear gamble? He might notice that poker is the national game of America, while chess is that of Russia, and that a country whose creed included the inevitable triumph of its own social system is not likely to try to accelerate history by a nuclear gamble.

Klaus Knorr, in his book *NATO and American Security*, published in 1959, expresses views which are rather similar to those of Wohlstetter which I have criticised: Knorr considered that by the mid-1960s, the nuclear balance would be unbreakably stable due to improved missiles and greater dispersion and mobility. However, he held that the balance was then in 1959 very unstable and would remain so until new technical developments came about. Thereafter the bases "would be protected against surprise attack and a counter-force strategy would no longer be attractive": so in 1959 Knorr held surprise attack to be *attractive*. "However, known possibilities are such that the risk of Soviet surprise attack on the United States may well be substantial and, indeed, dangerously high." No convincing evidence is produced to suppose that it would be technically possible for Russia to achieve the near 100 per cent effective first strike without which a surprise nuclear attack would neither be "sane" to use Mr. Wohlstetter's word nor "attractive" to use that of Mr. Knorr.

Dangerous Years

IT MAY BE OBJECTED that I am giving too much weight to the practical consequences of the wide dissemination of the military writings which I am criticising. Unfortunately, in my view, these writings have had a rather big influence. In *NATO in the 1960s* by Alastair Buchan, we read: "It is this enormous advantage now accruing to the man who strikes first and the degree of surprise that the missile permits that does more than anything else to create the instability of the strategic balance...." The influence of the "delicacy of the balance of terror" thesis is found also in the study *Foreign and Military Policy for Peace and Security*, published in 1959 by the Advisory Council of the Democratic National Committee of the Democratic Party of America. The view that the next few years, that is, until improved Western weapons are available, are exceptionally dangerous, is stated clearly by Paul Nitze in a recent article in *Survival*. The same view is taken by John Strachey in a recent lecture at Chatham House, and is explicitly derived from Wohlstetter's and Morgenstern's books. All these documents are very serious works containing a great amount of cogent analysis. But they all, either implicitly or explicitly, support the thesis of the progressive worsening of the present situation unless there is a great increase of expenditure on research and development on long-range missiles, and a large increase in their invulnerability. I believe this thesis to be false, and that its promulgation by so many able people is likely to lead to wrong allocation of priorities as well as worsening of the international atmosphere.

One danger arising from the theory of "The

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Delicate Balance of Terror," assuming that it greatly exaggerates this delicacy, lies in the hope it gives that Russia and America might reasonably strive to acquire a first-strike capability. America had this in effect from 1954 to 1957, since Russia had no effective power of hitting America at all. If, however, as I believe, a successful first strike would now demand not only a very large margin but also a quite unattainable degree of Intelligence, then the attempt to achieve a first-strike capability would be fruitless.

Though the American Administration seems to have set itself firmly against attempts to regain a first-counter-force capability by improved missiles and reconnaissance satellites, there seems to be a group which would like to try, and they must have been greatly heartened in their endeavour by the arguments that this can be done, given enough effort. This way leads to an endless and increasing arms race. Another group in America, who must welcome the "delicacy" school's conclusions, is the anti-test ban lobby. The case for further tests—America is said to have made about 170 tests to the Soviet's 60, so presumably has better bombs—is that further improvements to existing nuclear weapons would be of decisive significance in relation to the present balance. Till recently this appears to have been the view of the Atomic Energy Commission. I do not believe this to be the case. Since the British Government has been all along one of the chief architects of the near-successful test ban agreement, it has every reason to be wary of the conclusions of the academic military theorists, which have in fact often been used in favour of further testing.

If I personally believed that the present balance of nuclear terror was as unstable as these writers seem to think, I would in all seriousness conclude that the safest possibility for Great Britain, and ultimately for the world, would be for Britain to opt out completely from the nuclear arms race. Moreover, I myself would give up the arduous labour of studying the intricate arguments of these writers and devote myself to campaigning to achieve this.

By far the greatest danger of the "delicacy" thesis is its possible effect on negotiations for disarmament and arms control. It has, in fact, been widely used to suggest that serious negotiations with the U.S.S.R. should be postponed until the mid-1960s when the expected weapon developments will have occurred. For if the balance is really so delicate that it can be upset by some small increase in the numbers of deployed nuclear weapons on either side, or by some technical improvement in their performance, then it is clear that a degree of inspection and control would be required which might be unacceptable to both Soviet and Western blocs. Fortunately, I am sure that the present situation is rather stable, at least for the time being, and that the already grossly exaggerated feasibility of a successful surprise nuclear attack could be still further reduced by mutually acceptable control and inspection methods.

Belief in the thesis that the main danger to humanity at present is that Russia might find itself in a position to bring off a successful first strike and that it would be, in Wohlstetter's words, a sane policy for her to do so, tends to divert attention from real and immediate dangers. I have not the slightest doubt that the main danger to-day is not from the rational act of responsible statesmen, but is due to essentially irrational acts of irresponsible, frightened humiliated, revengeful or just mad people—or perhaps, more likely still, from the confused actions of well-meaning people overwhelmed by complex circumstances beyond their mental or moral ceiling. Clearly, the more nuclear weapons there are in the world, the more nations which possess them, the more will all defence systems become inextricably bound up with nuclear weapons, so that the number of fingers on nuclear triggers will grow and with it the danger of accidental or irresponsible nuclear war.

Bases and Vulnerability

THE PRESENT WESTERN drive to make its nuclear bases more invulnerable is intended mainly to reduce the likelihood of a deliberate surprise counter-force attack by the U.S.S.R. If I am right in supposing that the arguments which suggested that this was the main danger are quite false, since the system as a whole is already invulnerable enough, then the urgency of further hardening becomes less. It should be noted that the invulnerability of bases is of no value against irresponsible or mad attack which could be made directly against cities.

The hardening of bases has also the role of reducing the necessity for quick decision as to whether and when to retaliate against a suspected "irresponsible" attack—I assume a "responsible" one is in the highest degree unlikely. So it is essential that the attempt to make the Western bases more invulnerable by hardening,

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dispersal, and mobility must in no way increase the chances of accidental or irresponsible attack. This may be quite a difficult task.

Moreover, the danger of "accidental" war due to too quick reaction to false information, for instance spurious radar signals, is greatly increased by the belief that a surprise attack is likely to succeed. But if such an attack would lead to many mega-deaths to the attacker, then the advantage of reacting quickly is much less.

Looking broadly at the writings of this new school of academic military strategists it will be useful to try to detect how they have reached the false conclusions discussed above. I think the influence of the Theory of Games has been almost wholly detrimental. I can see little if anything in the methods outlined in such works as *Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour* by J. von Neumann and Oscar Morgenstern, or in *The Strategy of Conflict* by T. C. Schelling which are useful for making practical predictions. If they had, such methods would have become accepted by investors and card players. If such abstract theory cannot be applied in practice to such relatively simple activities, then it is clearly useless for the much more complicated problems of war. In fact the abstract theory of games is a branch of pure mathematics and almost wholly irrelevant to decision-making.

Then I think far too much is made of clear-cut logical distinctions in fields where a continuous gradation of facts and possibilities makes them inapplicable. It has been said that clear-cut definitions have little place at the beginnings of a scientific subject, and may be detrimental to progress. I believe this to be true of the present state of military analysis.

An example of this is the great stress laid on the distinction between vulnerable and invulnerable bases—a useful and common-sense distinction of venerable antiquity in military practice and theory. But when this distinction is carried too far in its application to practice, it can lead to absurdity. For instance, it is often concluded by these writers that the present Thor bases in Britain are now highly provocative because they are very vulnerable and so could only be used for a first strike. Thus—so the reasoning goes—their existence is a denial of the West's avowed intention not to make a first strike. In effect these writers are asking the U.S.S.R. to believe that the now alleged provocative nature of Western nuclear bases only began on the day when the Soviets acquired the power to destroy them. Would these writers have come to the same conclusion if the U.S.S.R. had produced nuclear weapons four years before the U.S.A.? Although the more realistic of these writers do agree that the nuclear balance becomes more stable, the more invulnerable the bases of *both sides*, they do not always pay tribute to the Soviet insistence on keeping their bases relatively invulnerable by their system of geographical security: nor have I noticed any strong disapproval of those aspects of Western policies which attempt to destroy this invulnerability by ceaseless propaganda and by aircraft and satellite reconnaissance. If this objective were achieved, then the theorists must conclude that the balance would be upset. Then an American surprise attack on the U.S.S.R. would become, in Wohlstetter's phrase, a sane policy. Of course this conclusion is not made because at this point the assumption of moral asymmetry is quietly inserted into the amoral world of games theory. There are legitimate differences of opinion about the moral characteristics of different nations: however, where the verbal and scholastic bias of these writers has led them astray is in their failure to clothe the skeleton conflicts of the theory of games with the complex flesh and blood attributes of real nations; hence the bizarre nature of some of their practical conclusions.

Another current logical distinction is that between preventative war and a pre-emptive first strike. The first is defined as an aggressive attack by a power which believes itself temporarily superior but knows that this superiority will not last. It is generally held in the West that the West will never wage preventative war. On the other hand, a pre-emptive first strike is an attack on the enemy when you *know* he is about to attack you; this, so the reasoning goes, is morally justified, if not imperative as the only way to avoid destruction. However clear-cut such distinctions may seem in a University study group, they are likely to become almost meaningless in the discussions of a High Command at a time of international crisis. For the unreliability of intelligence as to the enemy's strength and intentions, and the general fog of war preparations, is likely to dissolve these verbal distinctions into nothingness. It may be that some future historian may dig out of the ashes of a nuclear holocaust evidence for or against the view that some nation immorally

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waged preventative war or morally made a pre-emptive first strike.

At the back of these mistaken practical judgments lies, firstly, the failure of these military analysts to imagine themselves in the position of having to take the executive action they recommend, and secondly, the failure to grasp the complexity of the problems with which they would then be faced.

Social Pessimism

FINALLY, I feel conscious of a strain of deep social pessimism combined sometimes strangely with an almost neurotic contemplation of destruction. Perhaps this is most marked in the remarkable last chapter of Morgenstern's book. Under the revealing chapter heading "The Fascination of War" are to be found some astonishing dogmatic statements, made usually without the semblance of proof.

> The most interesting things in science at present are done only if they are related to war and war preparation. . . . Society does not accept the desire for knowledge unless it is in some way tied to war.

These statements are just false in the West to-day. The exciting advances in high energy nuclear physics, in visual and radio astronomy, in organic and bio-chemistry, in molecular biology, in embryology and immunology and a dozen other fields are wholly independent of war preparations. In fact, the fields directly affected are rather few. Morgenstern continues, "war preparations are necessary in order to justify the deepest human desire for knowledge." Here Morgenstern gives a non-military justification for armaments and one, which if followed literally, would lead to an endless arms race unrelated to real military needs. It would follow that disarmament would be a scientific disaster. Would he have President Kennedy tell Mr. Khrushchev that unfortunately America cannot reduce her armaments because this would mean falling behind in pure science? Some deep emotional factor must lie behind such absurdity.

If Morgenstern can make such gross mistakes about the rather simple facts of the effect of war preparations on modern pure scientific research, how can one trust his judgments on the far more complex and hypothetical problems of war? Temperamentally he seems to me to exhibit a deep social pessimism which contrasts flagrantly with the traditional extrovert optimism of America.

Some may think that the unexpectedly rapid deployment of Polaris armed submarines has greatly improved the stability of the balance, so that it is only of historic interest as to whether the balance was stable or unstable a few years ago. I do not think this is correct. For one thing, the number of such nuclear missiles now deployed operationally is too small a fraction of the West's total nuclear strength to turn an unstable into a stable system. More important is the possibility that the arguments which have been, in my view, falsely used to prove the balance unstable in recent years may be used in the future to prove it again unstable, in spite of expected improvement of weapons. So the truth or falsehood of the delicacy thesis will remain for many years of vital importance.

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Herbert Gold

Death in Miami Beach

THE state of madness can be defined partly as an extreme of isolation of one human being from everyone else. It provides a model for dying. Only an intermittent and fragmentary awareness of others interrupts the black folding of the layers of self upon each other—this also defines the state of that dilemma known as "mental health."

There is a false madness induced by the accidents of isolation which prisoners, travellers, and the very ill may sometimes experience without giving up their return ticket. Surely you out there all know what I mean from your own troubles and painful decisions. To say that it is false madness does not soften its extremity. The mask of existence fits harshly on your skin, but it is in fact your only skin; and when harshly your skin is peeled off—beneath it you are a naked banana. Your isolation, curved, erect, but comic, is no joy to you. You are bottom banana, exposed to shame in the sun, while the wide world of memory comes crowding to make stubbling love.

During a period of work on a long job of writing in the winter of 1958, I deliberately withdrew myself from all those who knew my name and travelled by automobile in slow stages through the deep south to Miami Beach, Key West, Havana, and finally back up towards Detroit. No one asked me to write a novel, no one asked me to go away; but I did anyway. I was tempted by the prospect of dreaming through my story amid a pleasant chaos of sun and sea, all other responsibilities suspended, and so I arranged it for myself. I was a confident banana.

Work is very fine, but after the day's work, isolation, silence, and death seemed to follow me through the zazzy carnival of Miami, the casual resort indolence of Key West, and the smoky, blistered elegance of a tourist's Havana. In Havana, from the rooftop of the Ambos Mundos Hotel, I could see police loafing with their weapons in front of public buildings; occasionally there were bombs; once a body happened to be left in the street and people hurried by as if they knew nothing, nothing, nothing at all but the next step before them.

At Key West, a few days before Christmas, I visited the turtle slaughterhouse. It is one of the few tourist attractions on this spot of island, "North Havana," raised far out into the sea off the coast of Florida. Visitors take their kiddies by the hand and lead them to see the nice turtles.

Before being killed and canned, the turtles swim in dense kraals, bumping each other in the murky water, armour clashing, dully lurching against the high pens. Later, trussed on a plank dock, they lie unblinking in the sun, their flippers pierced and tied. The tough leather of their skin does not disguise their present helplessness and pain. They wear thick, sun-hardened accumulations of blood at their wounds. Barbados turtles, as large as children, they belong to a species which has been eliminated locally by ardent harvesting of the waters near Key West, but the commercial tradition still brings them

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here to be slaughtered. Crucified like thieves, they breathe in little sighs, they gulp, they wait.

At a further stage, in the room where the actual slaughtering occurs, the butchers stride through gore in heavy boots. The visitor must proceed on a catwalk; a mis-step will plunge him into a slow river of entrails and blood. Because it was near Christmas time, the owners of the plant had installed a speaker system for musical divertissement of the butchers, and while the turtles dried under the sun or lay exposed to the butchers' knives, Christmas bells tolled out, electronically amplified, *"God rest ye merry, gentlemen,"* or the Bing Crosby recording of *"Adeste Fideles."*

These commercial details are not intended to support a special plea of behalf of the humane harvesting of Barbados turtles. In fact, let me grant that I sought out this scene and visited the abattoir without having any proper business there at all: merely curiosity and the need to confirm my imagination about it. I should be judged for vulgarity by the man who chooses out of purity not to follow me, not by the man I saw lurking outside, with a face ravaged by the horrified fascination which makes it impossible for him to visit his dreams. What had I done which he could not permit himself? Was I filthied, was I weakened by pleasure but obscurely nourished, was I fed on coveted turtle joys after tramping in turtle blood? Had I asked permission from the butcher and plied a knife with my own hands on the belly of one of the slow, unblinking, dragon-headed ancient sea beasts? And did it arch its graceful dragon neck in reproach as I stabbed? He stared at me like a jealous lover, imagining my wickedness, rabid and hopeless, wanting to bury his head in the reek on my hands.

Most of us turn from the vision of death only out of weakness, and this is no turning from death. Serve up your turtle steak, gourmet friend, with no protest from me; I'll eat at your table. ("A nice rendition," one gentleman said of Bing Crosby to his wife. Turtle is tasty, somewhat gamy meat. Protein nourishes the brain—brings oxygen and freedom.)

A FEW DAYS later in Miami Beach, I participated in two trivial accidents. My hotel was in one of the oldest, therefore least expensive parts of the town, only a short block from the sea and a short block from restaurants and therefore very convenient to my casual schedule: Breakfast at *Whelan*'s, a stretch of writing, a long swim, lunch, a pleasant bit of loafing on the beach, then perhaps some sun-baked work at my typewriter on the roof (*"solarium"*) and another swim before dinner. I had the habit in the morning of disregarding the elevator, hurrying down a back stairway of the Webster Hotel, through an alley, and so short-cutting to the drugstore. One day, wearing tennis shoes, I felt an evil slide and crunch underfoot, and knew first by the shrinking in my heart and then by simple inspection that I had stepped on a small animal.

It seemed to be a variety of tropical cockroach. It had been perhaps an inch-and-a-half long, longer with its wings spread, and it had strayed from the raised platform nearby where the hotel stored its rubbish. Now it lay twitching, legs scrambling in the air without moving, and a yellow ooze seeped from its body within the crushed carapace. I suppose it was already dead despite all this nervous movement. I went for a walk, told myself that this was a silly matter to be fretful about (I was merely isolated), and finally I took my habitual breakfast: orange juice, scrambled eggs, English muffin, coffee.

An hour later the dead beast was glued by its own innards to the paving of the alley; the Florida sun was moving through the sky above it. But now there was also a row of ants leading to it, another leading away, like twin caterpillars dissembling their unity of purpose. They were not merely eating, of course, they were carrying off the meat to their hive some place. But the dead roach still twitched, and when the tickling jaws struck, it fluttered, squeezed, blindly pushed in its place. The ants went scrambling away, each carrying its minuscule steak.

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All afternoon the shell of the roach was still there. Its row of legs no longer waved of their own power, but there were still tremors as the eating ants tugged at it. Unfatigued and busy, they were determined to wipe this slate clean.

Shortly before dark I again came down the back stairway. Now the familiar arena had changed. Another foot had struck, more strange and haphazard than my own. The shell of the roach was destroyed; there were also dead ants freckling the stone; stillness and death. The ants were suddenly individual in death; the undulating columns were erased. And the work of eating was permanently interrupted for both eaters and eaten.

The next morning when I walked through the alley no sign remained. A sweeper had done her work; there were straight, mechanical striations—a friendly broom. Good. But I bent to look for some sign or memorial to the departed beast on this stretch of alley which I now knew very well. There was none. Marks of broom; new arrangements of pebbles and dust; history here had entered upon an epoch which was strange to me.

THEN finally a homely death entered what might pass for society in my isolated Miami Beach—the world of the soda fountain at *Whelan*'s, where strollers came into an air-conditioned place to shake off the sand of the beach, sip a coke, buy lotions and plastic sun-glasses, and sometimes order a quick meal.

I was taking my breakfast, according to my habit, on a stool at the counter. By this time I was acquainted with Frank, the short-order cook, who had emigrated from Second Avenue in New York twenty years ago for his health and, for sweet health's sake, still managed to cover the leathery pouched skin of age with a fierce Miami tan, despite his long hours in *Whelan*'s service. It relieved the silence to exchange a few morning words with a man who by now knew my face: "Two scrambled, light."

"Same as yesterday, mister."

"Yes, like yesterday." (Triumph in my voice; he remembers me!) "Whole wheat toast. You got marmalade to-day?"

"Marmalade."

Frank knew my face and my eggs. Other eaters, like me, were forking up eggs and grits and sipping their cokes or coffee when the woman entered. She was blotched with sunburn, had a swollen nose, and a mouth open so wide for noise that all her features were distorted. She was shouting and rushing a stumbling old man along with her.

"Ohh," she screamed, "a Bromo! For God's sake a Bromo! My husband is dying, a Bromo, for God's sake!"

The man's face was blue and he seemed barely conscious. He swayed stiffly as she steered him towards a stool near me.

"Oh, a Bromo right now, please!" she wailed.

Frank, behind the counter, looked sideways at her, pretended the impossible—that he did not hear her—and went on making a bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwich on whole wheat toast, light on the mayonnaise.

Two or three of us jumped up to support the old man if he fell. His skin had a thick purple glow that said death to all our eyes.

"Oh, have mercy, a Bromo for my poor husband!" the woman screamed. "He didn't do nothing to you! For God's sake why don't you give it to him?"

Floundering, I watched Frank finish the *bee-ell-tee*, slide it on to a plate, and hand it to his customer. The hot-rodder bent his head and ate as if his life depended on it. In the meantime the pharmacist, a short man in a white coat, sweating profusely despite the air-conditioning, came bustling from his cubicle and said, "Heart attack? You want I should call a doctor, Missus?"

"Ohh, please, dear God, a Bromo!" she shouted.

"I'll call a doctor, he'll be right over."

"Bromo for a dying man! Why don't you give it to him? Mercy, mercy!"

The pharmacist was on the telephone and the howling woman subsided in shrill spasms. Her husband swayed on the stool, his eyes shut, while his wife leaned sobbing

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against his back to keep him from toppling on to the ground. She refused to let anyone touch him in order to lay him out on the floor—someone's idea—as if this ministry would commit him once and for all to the hands of death. Like everyone, my innards shrank from this; the flower of feeling closed tight; and then sealed, composed, I wanted to rush in some place, rush away; strike, destroy, *run*; kill Frank, kill the hot-rodder, because a man was dying and nobody could do anything. Thus righteousness substitutes for being straight with the world. I was sly and scared. Thus I occupied myself with rage at my friend Frank, who pretended to hear nothing and stubbornly refused to give him the glass of Bromo Seltzer.

DURING the five minutes before the doctor arrived the scene altered rapidly and tensely. Of course all the breakfasters but one determined hot-rodder stopped their eating. The kid in the leather jacket asked for pretzels to go with his coke for sustained strength behind the wheel. The rest of us drifted, lurking behind the sick man on his stool. His wife wept and cursed and heaved out her sobs because no one would supply a Bromo.

Then abruptly the man shook himself and opened his eyes and tried to stand up. He stumbled; his wife pushed him back on to the stool. He shook his head and mumbled. Then rapidly the purple colour diminished; his eyes stopped their blind rolling; he began to talk with his wife. He was returning to the living. He and his wife had a whispered consultation. She nodded rapidly at him, like a bird.

Suddenly she alighted and flew out the door. The man, left behind on the stool, said hoarsely, "Lemme have a glass of water, will you, pal?"

Frank gave him the water.

Now the doctor entered, rolling his sleeves down and carrying his black bag open. He had apparently run a block in the tropical morning heat.

"Haha!" said the formerly dying man. Just like that: "Hahaha! Hi, Doc!"

"You're the sick man?" said the doctor. "Let's see now——"

"Hahaha! Don't touch me, Doc," said the old man, leaning away. "Listen, Doc, it's a funny thing. My wife gets herself all excited —aggravated."

"You mean you're all right?" the doctor said.

"Just like a little attack was all I had, hahaha," said the old man.

"You're okay?"

"Look, Doc, I ain't been eating right, you know, hahaha. A little attack. I get them sometimes. Like a little attack is all."

"Okay," said the doctor firmly, "you don't want me to look at you? Okay." He nodded briskly to the pharmacist, said, "I've got a patient in my office," and trotted off again into the heat.

The old man smiled and gazed without malice at Frank, who had refused him the Bromo. Instead of leaving a tip he left him one word before he headed off after his wife. The word was deposited on the counter behind him with an apologetic smile: "Constipation."

EGGS in the plates of all the late breakfasters were left cold and shiny. The hot-rodder alone had finished his sandwich, coke, and pretzels, and left whistling. Angry at last, I discharged an unformulated hostility on Frank: "Why the devil didn't you give the man his Bromo?"

His reply seems an obvious bit of logical disquisition at this remove, but there in the shadow of panic and crisis it struck me with the force of revelation. Rubbing a dirty cloth on the counter—formulating and reformulating a smear of grease before me—he said, "If he was dying of a heart attack, what good would a Bromo do him? And if he was not dying, what good is a Bromo?"

"Yes, but."

"So I do my job and don't listen to nuts."

"But you didn't say anything! That woman was hysterical."

He looked at me with undisguised pity for my stupidity. "That's why I didn't say any-

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thing. I been in trouble for saying things before, I learned."

He went back to work; the pharmacist was back in his cubicle, counting pills into a bottle; the doctor had returned to his office. It was eleven o'clock and Frank took down the sign about the breakfast special. A man came in frightened to ask for the special, and Frank pointed to the sign, which was upside down on the counter, and said, "It's five minutes after eleven already. But I'll give it to you." The look of despair faded from the man's face.

IN A few days I finished my own job and began the long drive out of the false Florida summer into the northern winter, my wheels passing over all sorts of unfelt beasties, my gullet accepting steaks and chops, my heart leaping with no better welcome to death than before. In Detroit my daughter asked me, "What's God's last name? How big is the whole world? Where do you go when you die?"

THE foregoing inconclusive words were written two years ago. Now I have seen fit to return to my caféteria-and-old-folks' slum on lower Collins Avenue, and ostensibly for the same lure of cheap sun, sky, water, beach, boredom. I write, I swim, I stroll on Lincoln Road, I eat steaks and pizza, I sniff the sea with my sunburnt beak, I suck in my belly and run barefoot on the sand, I sleep, I write. In front of one of the new hotels I found a nude in plaster, beckoning, with her hand lifted as if hitching a ride. All aboard, you masturbators. Some of the fruit juice and hamburger stands have disappeared; new ones have opened. The Ellis Department Store, Here Since 1919, is closed, looks ransacked, has a spilled box of *Fruit of the Loom* tee shirts spilled in the window and a U.S. Federal Court bankruptcy notice affixed to its sealed door.

I met a waitress in a restaurant which advertises nine-course dollar dinners. She has a pretty, lively, 35-year-old girl's face, with all the black brightness of eye a man could want; she turns out to be Corsican and we speak French; an artillery sergeant brought her to Florida and apparently tired of her brightness of eye. She has a rattling Corsican accent, likes Edith Piaf records, and gives me extra shrimp bits in my shrimp bits salad. So some things change. Last time I heard no Edith Piaf and earned no extra forkfuls of shrimp. The sirloin steak she brings me spreads its wings and seems ready to flop off the plate. My gut talks French and I take ease in the flattery of food. I wait and at last she slips into my booth with me and sighs. It is eleven o'clock, time to begin real life. Her history is sad. I feel obliged to offer some recompense for the evil done her by men and luck, and so I listen, wondering how her eyes can remain so bright as the disasters and disillusionments unroll.

When I said good-night, she replied with a funny, rapidly fiddling, diddling, twenty-one-fingered gesture at her mouth. I asked what it meant. "Fun and glee!" she said, "fun and glee! *Maintenant je suis une vraie Americaine.*" Her eyes burn like stars, but like the stars, she has darkness between them.

A DAY and a night and another day. The first week passes.

I eat salty bagels in the sun, I listen to the teenage girls after school with their curious mixture of Florida cracker and Bronx accents, I go back into the damp of my room—the peculiar dank assault of cheap tropical bedrooms—and think my novel through once again, examining the pile of manuscript with my intentions in motion like a column of ants working over the struggling body of an insect. And when the life seems to weaken, I leave it and go out on to the beach or into the street.

Madness consists partly in an extreme of isolation? Partly. But the demented tumble down from their associations and memories into other associations and memories; they are sent away into the future with a map of the past which conforms to no agreed past and to no other map—and yet it is their only

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chart, their history and route, their needs which are unfailingly present. The lonely traveller also brutally inflicts absolute possession of his movements upon the endless day, and the novelty of what he sees joins him in yet another way to his deepest desires and dreads. He returns, he never lets go. There is no escape even in isolation; there is no isolation, merely interrupted and distorted association, until death claims us. Then every man is an island entire of itself.

In love, we seek freedom and purity even more than the comfort of diminished isolation. Those few fortunate ones who have the talent can bear the paradox of love. The rest of us are harassed by our contradictory demands—*join me, make me free*. With age and ageing, the model of all voyages (learn and grow, diminish and weary), comes final approach to the ultimate simplicity which love seeks to confound—death. A paradox forever out of balance to answer a grave black simplicity: *we are ill used*. The facts we make for ourselves disappoint the intentions with which we make them. The opposable thumb, which is said to be responsible for civilisation and history, gives us no answers here, though with it we can grasp our pens and break insects in our hands. Finally we die, opposable thumbs and all.

In the meantime, I visit my story. We exchange visits. I laugh over it, frown and worry over it, and urge it forward. Then I leave it for the Miami streets. The book follows me; it does not let me visit unaccompanied; it enters me instead and I try to shake it off as an adept at voodoo fights against possession by the importunate god. The opposable thumb is of no use in this contest; both the prize and the weapons have reached beyond tools, even tools of thinking; I am the quadruple god's horse—dream of love, hope of meaning, joy of power, relish in being. Too much burden on one soul. Who asked me to feel sorry or glad for others? They were merely pious who asked me. Why follow their orders? I decide: *I won't*. But I cannot escape my self, which also gives orders. The flower of feeling opens; the flower shuts; it obeys the freshness of weather. All emotion flowing from health or illness partakes of the pathetic fallacy, identifying moral value with the gifts of nature. My feet want to run; I am wearing *Keds*, and feel light on the foam rubber soles; but the heat of the sun holds me to earth.

THERE is a hotel on Washington Boulevard which specialises in "economical, comfortable living for the retired." It is a huge dark building like the Women's House of Detention in Greenwich Village, but without the bars on the rooms, and there are purple lights playing on the palm trees outside, soft music piped throughout the grounds, and the frequent blare of a loudspeaker: "Missus Goldberg to the telephone! Missus Goldberg! *Sadie, answer the phone!*" when the children call from New York. The streets of the neighbourhood are filled with chattering or mournful elder statesmen, mostly losers after sixty years of continual negotiation, men with chagrined pouches slipping sideways beneath their eyes, women with hair bursting onto their cheeks and upper lips, as if all at once, near the end, they have decided to make a final try at being better men than their husbands.

To walk through the crowd during the hour following their afternoon naps is to wade in senility. There is a deepsea lack of light despite all the sun and brisk resort clatter; you gasp for life and run to look in a dusty window. Narcissus wants to be just thirty-five, *"nel mezzo del camina di nostra vita,"* and not seventy, not seventy! The crowd flutters by. "She thought she could be my daughter-in-law! A girl like that! To be my daughter-in-law! And you know what? Now she is." "I used to be in business. I had a good business. It was a nice store, good location. Furniture. I should have kept my location." "What does the weather report say? Does the weather report ever say anything but the weather?" "Moishe died. He had an attack. Well, we all got to go."

Is it the same voice, the same rhythm? It is the same crowd—grief, isolation, death. There almost always seems to be an ambulance pulling up or pulling away.

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IT IS fine to tell a story, which feels like affirmation, but afterwards, after the morning's writing, then what? Writing is an expression of affirmation, power, longing, but not a proper cause of these emotions in the writer. He is a guide into delight and dread because he can escape victimisation (he thinks); he has left a little trail of paper behind him as he threads his way into the maze, and can find his way back (he believes) —though the roar of the maze sets up a disarray in anything as fragmentary as his intentions about return. He tracks the minotaur with an open mind. "Maybe I'll like it," he says, "and maybe I won't. At least I'll see." He initiates passion only because he has it—otherwise self-delusion and covetous self-therapy. And so it is not good to be alone for long, entirely alone.

But at least for a time, until they dim out, loneliness sharpens the eyes. I feel like a safe-cracker; loneliness has also sharpened my fingertips, and my entire body throughout feels the clicking tumblers as I yearn towards the combination. I come to focus, I work. But afterwards, then what? I have retreated from the distractions of Manhattan. There are no telephone calls. No friendship, no duties, no hazards of pique or pleasure. I shall work till the battery runs down, frozen and stilled by this busy emptiness under the sun. I ask myself: Can the silent column of ants reconstruct the living roach at its leisure underground? No, only a tree can make a tree, only a winged roach can make a winged roach. A column of ants works by an invisible will which resides in no one of its clawed parts, but only a swollen green ant can breed an urgent ant.

As I walk on Lincoln Road, the smart shopping area of "the Beach," I ogle the oglers, the sun-burned sun-worshippers basted with oil, cream, tonic, and lotion—the touts, boxers, fairies, grandmothers, exiled Cubans, local hot-rodders and their gum-chewing molls, sportsmen, natty invalids in gabardine, drunks, stockbrokers, antique collectors, semites and anti-semites all taking the air together on Lincoln Road. Hill people, swamp people, and ex-pugs sell newspapers flown in from all over—New York, Chicago, Los Angeles ("Smogsville!" cackles a refugee). And New York is harried by flu and Chicago is black with coal and damp. And here we all are on Lincoln Road, with a delicious breeze, courtesy of the steak-house pumping cool air into the street. So let's buy the hometown paper to see how miserable we might have been, for others are.

ON LINCOLN ROAD, fair Lincoln Road in Miami Beach, the negroes have been freed; freed of existence, that is; only a few black ghosts slip discreetly by. Even if they were not so discreet, they would be invisible, though for a new reason: they are going some place, namely, to work, or at another hour, home. For them, Lincoln Road is a mere artery for transit, while for the others, Lincoln Road is parlour, sunroom, promontory into health and beauty. For the visitors, Lincoln Road is a slow matter, a recipe for yearned-for slowness, sloth, strolling ease, delicacy of control. The cocky Broadway chapparoonies are wearing their new pleatless "Miami-Tailored Daks." Their bellies do the work of belts, hiding the place where belts would be. Now I'm so slow I don't need a belt, the pants proudly announce; I'm just walkin' along, just struttin' down the avenue, just here and pleasant with myself, and when I take a breath, the expandable elastic waistband expands with me. In the men's room of a bar off Lincoln Road, hung with photographs of wrestlers, there is a curious vending machine which is decorated with a crown and raised scepter and submits a product called DE-LA: "Say Delay, a light lubricating ointment designed to aid in the prevention of premature climax. Odourless. Safe. Stainless. Easy to apply. Directions on package. Fifty cent coins only. Machine does not give change."

Machine makes comment, however. Machine is trying to tell us something.

The negro girl who cleans my room gets yelled at, screamed at all morning. "Stupid, stupid, stupid! A single room only gets two towels, one face, one bath!" She smiles slyly to herself as if she knows where the

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manager's De-Lā is hidden. This is the southland, I am reminded, where we have grits for breakfast. But it is not quite dat ole Dixie, boss, which changeth not, nor can age alter it. It is Miami Beach. The Sholom Aleichem Literary Society (*Managed by Tourists—Managed for Tourists*) has a *For Rent* sign on it. *Owner Will Remodel for Any Business.*

I decide as I walk: I'll write my book till the battery runs down, though distraction seems necessary; other duties, friends, "real life."

The sirens of the police ambulances work up and down the Beach all day and night, announcing the news as they carry away the attacked, the fallen, the stroked, the perished. A population of the aged sheds its members at the merest trifle of an excuse—a bottle of cold pop in the sun, a skipped nap, somebody raising his voice suddenly—or no excuse at all. It touches life and someone dies. It treads carelessly and someone dies. The sirens whir and howl and negroes courteously open the back door for the corpse. For some reason people smile at the ambulance as they stroll, sucking ice-cream. Perhaps they dream of an accident, a distraction: *Siren meets white Thunderbird, boy of forty cut off in his prime, had a girl in there with him, not his wife.* Perhaps thinking: *Not me this time.*

ONE of those impossible coincidences. To-day I met Dr. Meyer leading his blind wife. He was our family doctor in Cleveland, addicted to practical jokes, who always said he wanted to do research, and in fact he had some sort of connection with one of the important drug laboratories. When he retired from practice, he announced to my parents over a bottle of wine that now he would begin his true life's work. I had decided that his practical jokes, bought in Jean's Fun House on East 9th Street—buzzers, false flies, stomach noises, leaky cups—were a symptom of childish anger at adult responsibility. But now that he could retire from practice and try his hand at research. . . . It turned out that his wife had inoperable cataracts; she went blind fast, and he went sour, quiet, mean; and they left Cleveland for Miami Beach, where I saw him leading her, walking with the stiff, frightened step of the unaccustomed blind. He is shrunken; only to-day do I notice that he is a small man—when I was a boy, he was immense. At present, and forever until the very end, his life's work is to steer his wife to the beach in the morning and sit with her to describe what he sees. He has replaced both practical jokes and dreams of a laboratory with loyalty to his wife, but virtue has made him a furious runt.

Fantasies of thighs, breasts, bellies as I nap on the beach. I awaken, sticky with salt. My nose is peeling. Shall I visit the Corsican waitress again to-night? Shall I ask the Meyers to dinner? But I have made this disappearance into Miami Beach in order to avoid the troubles of others and of myself. I swim again. I doze again. I dream of sex with a woman I overheard describing the proper way to kill a chicken "so it don't suffer. You ask anyone, they'll tell you. And there's nothing like fresh-killed chicken. You can't trust the butchers."

A man in the coffee shop later said to the cashier: "I been sick, that's why you ain't seen me. Doctor said coronary thrombosis. You ever heard of that?"

"Naw. Lots of people got coronaries, but that thrombosis, that's a new thing. The docs keep finding new things so they can charge us."

"Well I'll tell you, it left me feeling pretty weak."

I went one night to see a road company version of *My Fair Lady* at the Miami Beach Auditorium, which more frequently provides hospitality for wrestling or boxing matches. A maggoty, bored imitation of Rex Harrison, a thick Eliza without any bounce. The audience is quietly taking in the famous sight. They write on their postcards home: To-night we saw a Broadway show, but the girl was fat.

Crazy Louie on the beach—a frantic grandfather with Latin records, maracas, castanets, silk Cuban shirts, feathers, straw skirt, rubber Halloween masks, a huge earring loosely hooked to his ear by a bent hairpin, thick glasses sliding down his nose, leathery

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withered legs, dancing and dancing, all sinews and grins and shakes to some inner song while the portable phonograph goes rattle-and-scrape, screech, rattle, and scrape. Amazingly, the crowd which regularly gathers on the sand nearby seems to enjoy his music; some of them shake, too, dreaming of the days when they had lust to squander on their legs. Dr. Meyer's wife smiles as he describes the scene. "Are you smiling, Meyer?" she asks. He says yes but is lying. Crazy Louie bangs his castanet under her nose and screams "Olé!" and she jumps. At last Dr. Meyer smiles.

Then he tells her that sometimes the beginnings of arterio-sclerosis can be detected at age twenty-five. "Cuts off the blood supply to the brain. The psychiatrists think they're smart, but they can't do anything about the histological system. The brain dries up like a scab."

"Meyer, you shouldn't use such language."

"You mean histology?"

"I mean scab, Meyer."

Crazy Louie is dancing and cackling, kicking sand. The old ladies in their bathing skirts fan themselves contentedly as he enters his Afro-Cuban apocalypse. On the Beach there is a rural, village tolerance of madness. Louie doesn't do any harm. His children sent him down. He is new since my last visit.

AND where are my old friends?

The cockroach in the alley is long gone, of course, and its grandchildren unto many generations. But I have found cheap sun again for my sinus, and white ocean breaking against the distractions of Manhattan in winter, spring, summer, fall. I think of a friend, a Jewish chauvinist, arguing with his girl: "When your people were still living in trees and hitting each other with sticks, my people already had sinus trouble."

The Spinoza Forum is gone, replaced by a motel. Dr. Wolfson still goes to the beach every afternoon. But the neighbourhood is changed. He has nothing to say to me except that raw beets, honey, and tangerines keep a man virtuous and healthy, no matter what his age.

The woman who knew Thomas Wolfe—did I forget to mention that last time?—and swam as if she wanted to die, and worked as a B-girl . . . gone. She wanted to reconstruct some cabin-in-the-woods dream of perfection, but she could never find the missing pieces. Life is not a jigsaw puzzle; once it has been scrambled, the old picture is gone.

The racing car driver with whom I chatted a couple of times at breakfast—gone.

The column of ants at the cockroach—gone.

The drummed-up acquaintances—even their names forgotten.

The hotel clerk who wanted to explore in Guatemala—perhaps he is exploring in Guatemala. The new manager of the hotel has never even heard of him.

And the man who died—dead.

I know this for certain, for I have finally discovered an old friend. Frank, the grey bozo behind the counter at *Whelan*'s, is still there. I had taken up new eating habits and did not return to *Whelan*'s during my first week in Miami Beach, but then I did and found him, still building hamburger platters and scrambling eggs. At first he did not remember me. He never knew my name. When I reminded him of the incident about the man who dies, and of our long breakfast friendship, a look of irritation captured his face—demands were being made on him—but then his cross mug creased into a smile. He did remember me! He only needed to be reminded!

"You know that old fool," he said. "Later really did die. He's dead. Later died."

There was a new cat in the store. A new special on toothbrushes. A new pharmacist.

I had a hamburger on our old friendship, and Frank put an extra slice of tomato on the side to *prove* that he remembered me. But why should he? He had been an experience for me—the same now, with balder eyebrows—but what was I to him? For me he existed as an example of something, a moment of frightening history, a troubled memory which I had set down in words. I had needed

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a friend then, but he did not. I was frightened by death then, and worse, by a way of receiving death, but he was not and perhaps never admits that he might be.

Why does he stay in Miami Beach?

Yes, for a job. Yes, for the sun. But why there?

All right, then why not there?

Why do I go back?

Why did I go back? What happened to those dead and dying ones? They died and were dead; they were swept away. I thought, the first time I went to Miami Beach, that I had made a free choice to be isolated, but I discovered that everyone comes to the state of isolation in time—though not freely. What I did out of apparent health and youth, in the pleasure of work, those others did in sickness and age, in the anxiety of boredom. But eventually work is done, health turns to decay, youth turns to ripeness turns to age; feebleness and dying must precede death except for fighter pilots, who are anachronisms.

Miami Beach is an extension, adult education course in how to die, pursued with great seriousness by the enrollees. The old folks work at it with deliberate and modest intensity, in group sessions, complimenting each other on their tans, their sport shirts, their post-graduate skill at finding a proper weather. The young vacationers flush in on packaged tours, immerse themselves in the ceremonial indulgences of resort hotels, eat, swim, and enjoy their honeymoon wrestling, take in Eartha Kitt or Leo de Lion, sigh with boredom and excess, buy bottles of *Man Tan* at the air terminal (*Arrive With Fresh Sun On Your Cheeks!*), and flee back to real life with a secret conviction that this is leisure? Strictly for the birds, brother.

THAT first time in Miami Beach, I was a curious observer, obscurely moved, with the face of a man who fearfully unwinds a rope as he visits his dream of the turtle slaughterhouse. The second time (the last time!), two years' change had begun to discover my implication to me; I broke the rope; the model of death is real; the dream of dying is real. The tanned, reduced, heliotropic Doctor Meyer recognised me despite his wife's blindness ("Hannah! Look who's here!"), and when I spoke to her, she gropingly embraced me. This was why I went back—to feel Mrs. Meyer's arms hotly convulsed about my neck, as if I were still a boy in Cleveland, and to know that I was not. I was not a young man from Cleveland visiting Miami Beach as he had toured carnivals, the war, the Caribbean, Europe, and taken the boat-ride around Manhattan. I was a winter visitor, tired of town, come for the sun, who had been there before.

Am I now satisfied with what I found? Which is: "Later really did die. Later died." Just as in the alley two years ago, in that swept space where there was no longer any roach and no column of ants, history enters upon new epochs which begin to grow familiar to me.

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Claude Lévi-Strauss

Tristes Tropiques

From an Anthropologist's Memoirs (III)

A Writing Lesson

I WANTED somehow to arrive at a figure, however approximate, for the total of the Nambikwara population. In 1915 Rondon had put it at twenty thousand, which was probably too high. But at that time the nomadic bands were of several hundred people apiece, and all the indications I had collected along the line pointed to a rapid decline. Thirty years ago, for instance, the known fraction of the Sabané group comprised more than a thousand individuals; when that same group visited the telegraph station of Campos Novos in 1928 it consisted of one hundred and twenty-seven men, plus their women and children. In November, 1929, moreover, an influenza epidemic broke out when the group was camping at the point known as Espirro. The disease turned into a form of pulmonary œdema, and three hundred Indians died of it within forty-eight hours. The whole group disintegrated, leaving the sick and dying to fend for themselves. Of the thousand Sabané who had once been known of, only nineteen men and their families were still alive in 1938. This decline is due not only to the epidemic, but also to the fact that some years ago the Sabané were in a state of war with some of their easterly neighbours. But a large group installed not far from Tres Buritis was wiped out by influenza in 1927: of the six or seven survivors, only three were still alive in 1938. The Tarundé group, once one of the largest, numbered twelve men, with their families, in 1936: three years later these twelve were reduced to four.

WHAT WAS THE POSITION at the time of my arrival? Probably a bare two thousand Indians were scattered about the territory. I could not hope to make a systematic count, because certain groups were always hostile, and because, during the nomadic season, all the bands were continually on the move. But I tried to persuade my friends at Utiarity to take me to their village at a time when a rendezvous had been arranged with other allied or related bands. Thus I hoped to estimate the present size of a gathering of this sort and to compare it with the reunions that had been scrutinised in earlier years. I promised to bring them presents, and effect some exchanges, but the leader of the band remained hesitant: he was not sure of his guests, and if my companions and I were to disappear in the region where no white men had penetrated since the incident of the seven telegraph-workers in 1925, then the precarious peace which existed there would be compromised for a long time to come.

In the end he agreed, on condition that we cut down the size of our party, and took only four oxen to carry our presents. Even so, he said, we should have to forswear the usual tracks, because our beasts would never get through the dense vegetation which abounded in the lower reaches of each valley. We should have to go by the plateau, improvising our route as we went along.

THIS WAS A VERY DANGEROUS expedition, but it now seems to me largely grotesque. We had hardly left Juruena when my Brazilian colleague remarked to me on the absence of the Nambikwara women and children: only the men were with us, each armed with bow and arrows. All the literature of travel indicated this as a sign that an attack was imminent. Our feelings were

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mixed, therefore, as we went forward, verifying from time to time the position of our Smith and Wesson revolvers ("Cemite Vechetone" was our men's name for them) and our rifles. These fears proved misplaced: towards the half-way point of the day's march we caught up with the remainder of the band, whom their provident chief had sent on ahead of us, the day before, knowing that our mules would make much better time than the women, laden as these were with their baskets and encumbered with little children.

Soon after this, however, the Indians got lost. The new itinerary was not as straightforward as they had supposed. Towards evening we had to come to a halt in the bush. We had been promised that there would be game thereabouts and the Indians, counting on our rifles, had brought no food with them. We, for our part, had brought only emergency rations which could not be shared out all round. A troop of deer which had been nibbling away at the edge of a spring fled at our approach. The next morning everybody was in a thoroughly bad humour: ostensibly, this took for its object the leader of the band, whom they considered to be responsible for the venture which he and I had devised between us. Instead of going off to hunt or collect wild food on their own account, they decided to spend the day lying in the shade, leaving it to their leader to find the solution to their problem. He went off, accompanied by one of his wives: towards evening we saw them coming back with their baskets heavy-laden with grasshoppers that they had spent the entire day in collecting. Grasshopper pie is not one of their favourite dishes, but the entire party fell on it, nonetheless, with relish. Good humour broke out on all sides, and on the next morning we got under way again.

And, at last, we got to the rendezvous. This was a sandy terrace above a watercourse, bordered with trees between which the Indians had laid out some little gardens. Incoming groups arrived at intervals during the day and by the evening there were seventy-five people in all: seventeen families, grouped under thirteen crude shelters hardly more solid than those which served in camp. I was told that when the rains began the whole company would take refuge in five round huts built for several months' wear. Many of the natives seemed never to have seen a white man, and their more than dubious welcome combined with their leader's extreme nervousness seemed to suggest that he had forced their hand, somewhat, in the whole matter. Neither we nor the Indians felt at all at our ease and, as there were no trees, we had to lie, like the Nambikwaras, on the bare ground. No one slept: we kept, all night long, a polite watch upon one another.

It would have been rash to prolong the adventure, and I suggested to the leader that we should get down to our exchanges without further delay. It was then that there occurred an extraordinary incident which forces me to go back a little in time.

That the Nambikwara could not write goes without saying. But they were also unable to draw, except for a few dots and zigzags on their calabashes. I distributed pencils and paper among them, none the less, as I had done with the Caduveo. At first they made no use of them. Then, one day, I saw that they were all busy drawing wavy horizontal lines on the paper. What were they trying to do? I could only conclude that they were writing—or, more exactly, that they were trying to do as I did with my pencils. As I had never tried to amuse them with drawings, they could not conceive of any other use for this implement. With most of them, that was as far as they got: but their leader saw further into the problem. Doubtless he was the only one among them to have understood what writing was for. So he asked me for one of my notepads; and when we were working together he did not give me his answers in words, but traced a wavy line or two on the paper and gave it to me, as if I could read what he had to say. He himself was all but deceived by his own play-acting. Each time he drew a line he would examine it with great care, as if its meaning must suddenly leap to the eye; and every time a look of disappointment came over his face. But he would never give up trying, and there was an unspoken agreement between us that his scribblings had a meaning that I did my best to decipher; his own verbal commentary was so prompt in coming that I had no need to ask him to explain what he had written.

And now, no sooner was everyone assembled than he drew forth from a basket a piece of paper covered with scribbled lines and pretended to read from it. With a show of hesitation he looked up and down his "list" for the objects to be given in exchange for his people's presents. So-and-so was to receive a machete in return for

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his bow and arrows, and another a string of beads in return for his necklaces—and so on for two solid hours. What was he hoping for? To deceive himself, perhaps: but, even more, to amaze his companions and persuade them that *his* intermediacy was responsible for the exchanges. He had allied himself with the white man, as equal with equal, and could now share in his secrets. We were in a hurry to get away, since there would obviously be a moment of real danger at which all the marvels I had brought would have been handed over.... So I did not go further into the matter and we set off on the return journey, still guided by the Indians.

THERE had been something intensely irritating about our abortive meeting, and about the mystifications of which I had just been the unknowing instrument. Added to that, my mule was suffering from aphtha, and its mouth was causing it pain, so that by turns it hurried impatiently forward and stopped dead in its tracks. We got into a quarrel with one another and, quite suddenly, without realising how it happened, I found myself alone, and lost, in the middle of the bush.

What was I to do? What people do in books: fire a shot in the air to let my companions know what had happened. I dismounted and did so. No reply. I fired again, and as there seemed to be an answer I fired a third shot. This scared my mule, who went off at a trot and pulled up some distance away.

I put weapons and photographic equipment neatly at the foot of a tree, memorised its position, and ran off to recapture my mule, who seemed quite peaceably disposed. He let me get right up to him and then, just as I reached for the reins, he made off at full speed. This happened more than once until in despair I jumped at him and threw both my arms round his tail. This unusual proceeding took him by surprise, and he decided to give in. Back in the saddle, I made as if to collect my belongings, only to find that we had twisted and turned so often that I had no idea where they were.

DEMORALISED BY THIS EPISODE, I decided to rejoin our troop. Neither my mule nor I knew where they had gone. Sometimes I would head him in a direction that he refused to take; sometimes I would let him lead, only to find that he was simply turning in a circle. The sun was going down, I was no longer armed, and I expected at every moment to be the target of a volley of arrows. I was not, admittedly, the first white man to penetrate that hostile zone. But none of my predecessors had come back alive and, quite apart from myself, my mule was a tempting prey for people who rarely have anything very much to get their teeth into. These dark thoughts passed, one by one, through my mind as I waited for the sun to go down, thinking that since I at least had some matches with me I could start a bush-fire. Just as I was about to strike the first match I heard voices: two of the Nambikwara had turned back, the moment my absence was noticed, and had been following me all afternoon. For them to recover my equipment was child's play and, at nightfall, they led me to the camp where our whole troop was waiting for me.

Still tormented by this absurd incident, I slept badly. To while away the hours I went back, in my mind, to the scene of the previous morning. So the Nambikwara had learnt what it meant to write! But not at all, as one might have supposed, as the result of a laborious apprenticeship. The symbol had been borrowed, but the reality remained quite foreign to them. Even the borrowing had had a sociological, rather than an intellectual object: for it was not a question of knowing specific things, or understanding them, or keeping them in mind, but merely of enhancing the prestige and authority of one individual—or one function—at the expense of the rest of the party. A native, still in the period of the stone age, had realised that even if he could not himself understand the great instrument of understanding he could at least make it serve other ends. For thousands of years, after all, and still to-day in a great part of the world, writing has existed as an institution in societies in which the vast majority of people are quite unable to write. The villages where I stayed in the Chittagong hills in Pakistan are populated by illiterates; yet each village has a scribe who fulfils his function for the benefit both of individual citizens and of the village as a whole. They all know what writing is and, if need be, *can* write: but they do it from outside as if it were a mediator, foreign to themselves, with whom they communicate by an oral process. But the scribe is rarely a functionary or an employee of the group as a whole; his knowledge is a source of power—so much so, in fact, that the functions of scribe and usurer are often united in the same human being. This is not merely because the usurer needs to be

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able to read and write to carry on his trade, but because he has thus a twofold empire over his fellows.

WRITING is a strange thing. It would seem as if its appearance could not have failed to wreak profound changes in the living conditions of our race, and that these transformations must have been above all intellectual in character. Once men know how to write, they are enormously more able to keep in being a large body of knowledge. Writing might, that is to say, be regarded as a form of artificial memory, whose development should be accompanied by a deeper knowledge of the past and, therefore, by a greater ability to organise the present and the future. Of all the criteria by which people habitually distinguish civilisation from barbarism, this should be the one most worth retaining: that certain peoples write and others do not. The first group can accumulate a body of knowledge that helps it to move ever faster towards the goal that it has assigned to itself; the second is confined within limits that the memory of individuals can never hope to extend, and it must remain the prisoner of a history worked out from day to day, with neither a clear knowledge of its own origins nor a consecutive idea of what its future should be.

YET NOTHING OF WHAT we know of writing, or of its role in evolution, can be said to justify this conception. One of the most creative phases in human history took place with the onset of the neolithic era: agriculture and the domestication of animals are only two of the developments which may be traced to this period. It must have had behind it thousands of years during which small societies of human beings were noting, experimenting, and passing on to one another the fruits of their knowledge. The very success of this immense enterprise bears witness to the rigour and the continuity of its preparation, at a time when writing was quite unknown. If writing first made its appearance between the fourth and third millennium before our era, we must see it not, in any degree, as a conditioning factor in the neolithic revolution, but rather as an already-distant and doubtless indirect result of that revolution.

With what great innovation can it be linked? Where technique is concerned, architecture alone can be called into question. Yet the architecture of the Egyptians or the Sumerians was no better than the work of certain American Indians who, at the time America was discovered, were ignorant of writing. Conversely, between the invention of writing and the birth of modern science, the western world has lived through some five thousand years, during which time the sum of its knowledge has rather gone up and down than known a steady increase. It has often been remarked that there was no great difference between the life of a Greek or Roman citizen and that of a member of the well-to-do European classes in the 18th century. In the neolithic age, humanity made immense strides forward without any help from writing; and writing did not save the civilisations of the western world from long periods of stagnation. Doubtless the scientific expansion of the 19th and 20th centuries could hardly have occurred, had writing not existed. But this condition, however necessary, cannot in itself explain that expansion.

IF WE WANT to correlate the appearance of writing with certain other characteristics of civilisation, we must look elsewhere.

The one phenomenon which has invariably accompanied it is the formation of cities and empires: the integration into a political system, that is to say, of a considerable number of individuals, and the distribution of these individuals into a hierarchy of castes and classes. Such is, at any rate, the type of development which we find, from Egypt right across to China, at the moment when writing makes its *débuts*; it seems to favour rather the exploitation than the enlightenment of mankind. This exploitation made it possible to assemble workpeople by the thousand and set them tasks that taxed them to the limits of their strength: to this, surely, we must attribute the beginnings of architecture as we know it. If my hypothesis is correct, the primary function of writing, as a means of communication, is to facilitate the enslavement of other human beings. The use of writing for disinterested ends, and with a view to satisfactions of the mind in the fields either of science or the arts, is a secondary result of its invention—and may even be no more than a way of reinforcing, justifying, or dissimulating its primary function.

THERE ARE, HOWEVER, EXCEPTIONS to this rule. Ancient Africa included empires in which several hundred thousand subjects acknowledged a single rule; in pre-Colombian America, the Inca empire numbered several million subjects. But, alike in Africa and in America, these ven-

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tures were notably unstable: we know, for instance, that the Inca empire was established in the twelfth century or thereabouts. Pizarro's soldiers would never have conquered it so easily if it had not already, three centuries later, been largely decomposed. And, from the little we know of the ancient history of Africa, we can divine an analogous situation: massive political groups seem to have appeared and disappeared within the space of not many decades. It may be, therefore, that these instances confirm, instead of refuting, our hypothesis. Writing may not have sufficed to consolidate human knowledge, but it may well have been indispensable to the establishment of an enduring dominion. To bring the matter nearer to our own time: the European-wide movement towards compulsory education in the 19th century went hand in hand with the extension of military service and the systematisation of the proletariat. The struggle against illiteracy is indistinguishable, at times, from the increased powers exerted over the individual citizen by the central authority. For it is only when everyone can read that Authority can decree that "ignorance of the law is no defence."

ALL THIS MOVED RAPIDLY from the national to the international level, thanks to the mutual complicity which sprang up as between newborn states—confronted as these were with the problems that had been our own, a century or two ago—and an international society of peoples long privileged. These latter recognise that their stability may well be endangered by nations whose knowledge of the written word has not, as yet, empowered them to think in formulæ which can be modified at will. Such nations are not yet ready to be "edified;" and when they are first given the freedom of the library shelves they are perilously vulnerable to the ever more deliberately misleading effects of the printed word. Doubtless the die is already cast, in that respect.

But in my Nambikwara village people were not so easily taken in. Shortly after my visit the leader lost the confidence of most of his people. Those who moved away from him, after he had tried to play the civilised man, must have had a confused understanding of the fact that writing, on this its first appearance in their midst, had allied itself with falsehood; and so they had taken refuge, deeper in the bush, to win themselves a respite.

And yet I could not but admire the genius of their leader, for he had divined in a flash that writing could redouble his hold upon the others and, in so doing, he had got, as it were, to the bottom of an institution which he did not as yet know how to work. The episode also drew my attention to a further aspect of Nambikwara life: the political relations between individuals and groups. This I was shortly to be able to scrutinise more directly.

WE WERE still at Utiarity when an epidemic of purulent ophthalmia broke out among the natives. This infection, gonococchic in origin, soon spread to every one of them. Apart from being terribly painful, it led to what threatened to be permanent blindness.

For several days the entire band was paralysed. They treated their eyes with water, in which a certain kind of bark had been soaked: this they introduced into the eye with the help of leaves rolled into the shape of a funnel. The disease spread to my own group. My wife was the first to catch it. She had taken part in all our previous expeditions and had taken her full share in the study of material culture: but now she was so seriously ill that I had to send her back home. Most of our bearers went sick, and so did my Brazilian associate. Before long it was out of the question to go any farther.

I ordered the main body of our party to rest, left our doctor behind to do what he could for them, and myself pushed on with two men and a few animals to the station of Campos Novos, near which a number of Indian bands had been reported. There I spent a fortnight in semi-idleness, picking the barely ripe fruit of an orchard which had "gone back to Nature:" guavas whose bitter taste and stony texture belied the promise of their scent; *caju*, vivid in colour as any parakeet, with a flesh that concealed within its spongy cells an astringent, delicately flavoured juice. And when the larder was empty we had only to get up at dawn and make our way to a thicket, a few hundred yards from the camp, where wood-pigeons would turn up, sharp on time every day, and offer themselves as our prey. At Campos Novos, too, I met two bands which had arrived from the north, drawn by the rumour of the presents I had brought with me.

THESE TWO BANDS were as ill disposed towards one another as they were towards me. From the outset, my gifts were not so much solicited as exacted. During the first few days only one of

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the bands was in evidence, together with a native from the Utiarity group who had gone on ahead of me. Did he show too much interest in a young woman who belonged to our hosts' group? I believe he did. Relations were bad, almost from the start, between the strangers and their visitor, and he dropped into the habit of coming over to my camp in search of a more cordial welcome. He also shared my meals. This fact was taken note of: and one day when he was out hunting I was visited by a delegation of four Indians. There was a distinct menace in the tone of voice in which they urged me to put poison into his food. They would bring me all that I needed: four little tubes bound together with cotton and filled with grey powder. I was very much put out: yet, as an outright refusal would turn the whole band against me, I felt it best to go carefully, in view of their maleficent intentions. So I decided to know less of their language than I really did. Faced with my look of total incomprehension, the Indians repeated to me over and over again that my guest was *kakoré*, very wicked, and that I should get rid of him as soon as possible. Eventually they made off, with every sign of discontentment. I warned my guest of what had occurred, and he at once took to his heels. Not till months later, when I revisited the region, did I see him again.

LUCKILY the second band arrived on the following day, giving the Indians a new target for their hostility. The meeting took place at my camp, which was both neutral ground and the terminal-point of their respective journeyings. I had, therefore, a front seat in the stalls. The men of each party came up on their own; a lengthy conversation followed between their respective leaders, consisting mainly of monologues, in alternation, on a plaintive, nasal note that I did not remember having encountered before.

"We are very angry!" one group kept on whining. "You are our enemies!"

To which the others replied: "We are not at all angry! We are your brothers! Friends! We can understand each other!" and so on.

Once this exchange of protests and provocations was over, a common camp was set up, close to my own. After some dancing and singing, during which each group played down its own contribution and glorified that of its adversaries—"The Tamaindé sang so well! And we sing so badly!"—quarrelling began again, and before long tempers began to run high. The night had hardly begun when the noise of argument-cum-singing set up a tremendous row, the significance of which was lost upon me. Threatening gestures could be seen, and once or twice men actually came to blows and had to be separated. The menaces consisted, in every case, of gestures relating in some way to the sexual organs. A Nambikwara shows hostility by taking his penis in both hands and pointing it towards his adversary. This is the prelude to an attack on the adversary in question, with a view to wrenching off the tuft of *buriti* straw that hangs down from the front of his belt, just above his private parts. These parts are "hidden by the straw" and the point of fighting is to get the other man's straw away from him. This is an entirely symbolic action, for the masculine *cache-sexe* is so fragile, and in any case so insubstantial, that it serves neither to protect nor, in any true sense, to dissimulate the parts in question. Another mark of victory is to wrest your opponent's bow and arrows from him and put them down some distance away. At all such times the Indians take on attitudes of extreme intensity, as if in a state of violent contained rage. Eventually these individual quarrels end up in a general pitched battle. But on this occasion they died down at dawn. Still in the same state of evident exasperation, and with the roughest of gestures, the adversaries began to scrutinise one another closely, fingering an earring here and a cotton bracelet or feathered ornament there, and muttering, rapidly throughout: "Give . . . give . . . give . . . look at that . . . how pretty!" to which the owner would reply: "No, no . . . it's ugly, old, worn-out. . . ."

THIS reconciliatory inspection marks the end of the conflict. It introduces, as between the two groups, another kind of relationship: that of the commercial exchange. The material culture of the Nambikwara may be of the rudest, but each band's manufactures are, none the less, highly prized in the outer world. Those in the east are short of pottery and seed-beads. Those in the north consider that their southerly neighbours make particularly beautiful necklaces. The meeting of two groups, once established upon a pacific level, will therefore engender a whole series of reciprocal gifts: the battlefield turns into a market-place.

But the exchanges go forward almost imperceptibly: the morning after the quarrelling everyone went about his normal occupations, and objects or products changed hands without

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either donor or recipient making any outward allusion to what was going forward. Balls of thread and raw cotton; lumps of wax or resin; urucu paste; shells, ear-rings, bracelets, and necklaces; tobacco and seed-beads; feathers and strips of bamboo that could be made into arrow-heads; bunches of palm-fibres and porcupine-quills; complete pots and potsherds; calabashes. This mysterious traffic went on until the day was half over, when the two groups separated and went off, each on his own way.

The Nambikwara leave everything, on such occasions, to the generosity of their "opposite number." Totally foreign to them is the notion that anyone could set a price on any object, discuss that price, haggle over it, insist on getting it, or "chalk it up" as a debt. I once offered an Indian a forest-knife in return for his having carried a message to a nearby group. When he came back I did not immediately give him the knife, because I assumed that he would come and ask for it. But nothing of the kind: and the next day I couldn't find him anywhere. His friends told me that he had gone away in a rage, and I never saw him again. I had to entrust the present to another Indian.

This being so, it is not surprising that when the exchanges are over one side or the other is often discontented with the result; and that, as weeks and then months go by, and he counts up, over and over again, the presents he received, and compares them with those he has given, he becomes more and more bitter.

Often this bitterness turns to aggression. Many a war has broken out for no other reason. There are other causes, of course: a murder, or a rape to be either brought off or avenged. It does not seem as if a band feels itself bound to take collective reprisals for an injury done to any one of its members. But such is the animosity which reigns between groups that often every advantage is taken of pretexts of this kind, especially if the group in question feels itself in a strong position. The case is then presented by a warrior, who sets out his grievances in the same tone and in much the style of the encounter-ritual: "Hallo there! Come here! Now look here—I'm very angry! Really very angry indeed! Arrows! Big arrows!"

Specially dressed for the occasion—tufts of *buriti* straw striped with red, jaguar-skin helmets—the men assemble behind their leader and dance. A divinatory rite must be observed: the chief, or the sorcerer, if one exists, hides an arrow in a corner of the bush. The next day the men search for the arrow and, if it is stained with blood, war is declared: if not, they call it all off. Many expeditions that begin in this way come to an end after a few miles' march. The war-party loses all its enthusiasm and excitement and turns back towards home. But sometimes the venture is pressed to its conclusion, and blood is shed. The Nambikwara attack at dawn, after having first scattered to create the conditions of an ambush. The signal to attack passes from man to man by means of the whistle that each carries round his neck. This whistle, made up of two tubes of bamboo tied together with cotton, makes a noise like that of the cricket and, doubtless for that reason, bears the same name. The war-arrows are those used in peace-time for hunting the bigger game, but their points are cut to a saw-edge. Arrows poisoned with curare, though common in hunting, are never used in battle, because anyone wounded by one of them would get it out before the poison had had time to get into his veins.

A Little Glass of Rum

How can the anthropologist get free of the contradiction implicit in the circumstances of his choice? Under his very nose, and at his disposition, he has a society: his own. Why does he decide to disdain it, reserving for societies distant and different from his own the patience and devotion which he has deliberately withheld from his fellow-citizens?

It is not by chance that the anthropologist is rarely on terms of neutrality with his own social group. Where he is a missionary or an administrator, he can be presumed to have identified himself so entirely with a certain order that all his energies are now given to its propagation. And when his professional activity takes place on the scientific or higher academic level, objective factors in his past can very probably be adduced to prove that he is ill- or unsuited to the society into which he was born. He has, in fact, become an anthropologist for one of two reasons: either he finds it a practical method of reconciling his membership of a group with his severely qualified acceptance of it—or, more simply, he wishes to turn to advantage an initial attitude of detachment which has already brought him, as we say, "half-way to meet" societies unlike his own.

But if he tries to think straight, he will have to ask himself whether he is really justified in

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setting such great store by exotic societies (and the more exotic they are, the more he will prize them). Is this not rather a function of the disdain, not to say the hostility, which he feels for the customs of his own milieu? At home, the anthropologist may be a natural subversive, a convinced opponent of traditional usage; but no sooner has he in focus a society different from his own than he becomes respectful of even the most conservative practices. Nor is this mere perversity; I have known anthropologists who were also conformists. But their conformism is derived retrospectively and at second hand, as a result of their having already assimilated their own society into the societies they were investigating. It is to the latter that they owe allegiance, and, if they have thought better of their initial revolt against their own society, it is because they have made an additional concession to the others: that of treating their own society as they would wish all others to be treated.

The dilemma is inescapable: either the anthropologist clings to the norms of his own group, in which case the others can only inspire in him an ephemeral curiosity in which there is always an element of disapproval; or he makes himself over completely to the objects of his studies, in which case he can never be perfectly objective, because in giving himself to all societies he cannot but refuse himself, wittingly or not, to one among them. He commits, that is to say, the sin with which he reproaches those who question the privileged status of his vocation.

I FIRST BEGAN to worry seriously about this at the time of an enforced sojourn in the Antilles. In Martinique I went over certain rusticated, half-abandoned rum-distilleries where neither methods nor apparatus had been changed since the 18th century. In Puerto Rico, by contrast, the factories of the company which enjoys a quasi-monopoly of cane-sugar were agleam with white-enamelled tanks and chromium-plated faucets. And yet in Martinique, where the ancient wooden barrels are silted up with sediment, the rum was like velvet on the palate and had a delicious scent: in Puerto Rico it was brutal and vulgar. Can it be that the finesse of the Martiniquais rums was due to impurities which archaic methods of manufacture do nothing to disturb?

The contrast illustrated, to my way of thinking, the paradox of civilisation: we know that its magic derives from the presence within it of certain impurities, and yet we can never resist the impulse to clean up precisely those elements which give it its charm. We are doubly right but that very rightness proves us wrong. For we are right to wish to increase our production and cut manufacturing costs. But we are also right when we treasure some of the imperfections which we are doing our best to eliminate. Society sets itself, in short, to destroy precisely those things which give it most flavour.

This contradiction does not seem to apply so directly to societies unlike our own. For as we are ourselves implicated in the evolution of our own society, we are to some extent in the dock with the accused. Our situation compels us to take certain courses of action towards certain ends, and there is nothing we can do to prevent this. But when another society comes under scrutiny, all is changed: objectivity, out of the question before, is ours for the asking. Where we had been agents in the transformations in progress, we become mere spectators, all the more able to estimate the situation in that the balance of future and past, which had been presented to us as a moral dilemma, can now be a pretext for æsthetic contemplation and disinterested meditation.

IN THUS THINKING THE MATTER OUT, I may have shown just where the contradiction lies. I may have shown where it began, and how we managed to come to terms with it. But I have certainly not put an end to it. Must we therefore conclude that it is with us for ever? People have sometimes said so, and inferred from this that our work was quite pointless. Our vocation expressed itself, they said, in a liking for societies and cultures very different from our own. It caused us, in fact, to overestimate the one at the expense of the other. Surely this pointed to a basic inconsistency? How could we announce that these societies were "important," if our judgment were not based on the values of the society which inspired us to begin our researches? We ourselves were the products of certain inescapable norms; and if we claimed to be able to estimate one form of society in its relation to another we were merely claiming, in a shamefaced and roundabout way, that that society was superior to all the others.

Behind the arguments of these worthy spokesmen there was nothing but an execrable play upon words: they pretended that mystification (which they themselves so often practise) is the contrary of mysticism (with which they, quite

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wrongly, reproach us). The enquiries of archæology and anthropology show that certain civilisations—some of them now vanished, others still with us—have known quite well how best to solve problems with which we are still struggling. To take one instance only: it is now only a few years since we discovered the physical and physiological principles on which are based the Eskimos' costume and manner of life. If they can exist in these conditions, it is not from long conditioning, or from an exceptional physical constitution, but from their discovery of scientific principles of which we had until lately no idea at all. So true was this that it also exploded the pretensions of those explorers who had claimed to have "improved upon" Eskimo costume: the results were the opposite of those that had been hoped for. The Eskimos had already arrived at the perfect solution: all that we needed, to be convinced of this, was to grasp the theory which lay beneath it.

THE DIFFICULTY does not lie there. Certain social groups must be adjudged superior to ourselves, if the comparison rests upon their success in reaching objectives comparable to our own; but, in the same instant, we earn the right to pass judgment upon them, and therefore to condemn all those other objectives which do not coincide with our own. Implicitly we claim for our own society, for its customs, and for its norms, a position of privilege, since an observer from a different social group would pass different verdicts upon those same examples. This being so, how can we claim for our studies the name of science?

If we are to get back to a position of objectivity, we should abstain from all judgments of this sort. We have to admit that human societies can choose among a gamut of possibilities. These choices cannot be compared with each other: one is as good as another. But then there arises a new problem; for if, in the first instance, we are threatened by obscurantism, in the form of a blind rejection of anything that is not our own, there is also an alternative danger: that of an eclecticism which bids us reject nothing at all, when faced with an alien culture. Even if that society should itself protest against the cruelty, the injustice, and the poverty which characterise it, we must not pass judgment. But as these abuses also exist among ourselves, how shall we have the right to fight them at home if, when they appear elsewhere, we make no move to protest?

THE ANTHROPOLOGIST WHO IS critic at home and conformist elsewhere is therefore in a contradictory position. But beneath this contradiction is another, from which it is even less easy to escape. If he wishes to contribute to the improvement of his own social system he cannot but condemn, wherever he comes upon them, conditions analogous to those which he deplores at home. He loses, in so doing, all claim to be objective and impartial. Conversely the detachment enjoined upon him by moral scruples, and by the rigorous methods of science, will prevent him from finding fault with his own society, once it is taken for granted that his business is to know, not to pass judgment. The man who takes action in his own country cannot hope to understand the world outside: the man who takes all knowledge for his ambition must give up the idea of ever changing anything at home.

If the contradiction were insurmountable the anthropologist would be wrong to hesitate over the alternatives which are open to him. He is what he has chosen to be: an anthropologist; therefore he must accept the mutilated condition which is the price of his vocation. He has chosen and must accept the consequences of his choice: his place lies with "the others," and his role is to understand them. Never can he act in their name, for their very otherness prevents him from thinking or willing in their place: to do so would be tantamount to identifying himself with them. He must also resign himself to taking no action in his own society, for fear of adopting a partisan's position in respect of values which may recur in other societies: such a position could not but then prejudice his judgment. His initial choice alone will remain, and he will make no attempt to justify that choice. It is a pure, a motiveless act: or, if motivated at all, will derive from external considerations, borrowed from the history or the character of each one of us.

LUCKILY we have not yet reached that point. We are on the edge of the abyss, and we have peeped into it, but we can still look for a way out. And get out we can, provided that we are not too extreme in our judgments and are willing to phase the difficulty in two stages.

No society is perfect. Each has within itself, by nature, an impurity incompatible with the norms to which it lays claim: this impurity finds outlet in elements of injustice, cruelty, and insensitivity. How are we to evaluate those elements? Anthropological enquiry can provide

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the answer. For while the comparison of a small number of societies will make them seem very different from one another, these differences will seem smaller and smaller as the field of investigation is enlarged. It will eventually become plain that no human society is fundamentally good: but neither is any of them fundamentally bad; all offer their members certain advantages, though we must bear in mind a residue of iniquity, apparently more or less constant in its importance, which may correspond to a specific inertia which offers resistance, on the level of social life, to all attempts at organisation.

THIS MAY SURPRISE the habitual reader of travel-books, who delights in hearing of the "barbarous" customs of this people or that. But these superficial reactions are soon put in their place, once the facts have been correctly interpreted and re-established in a wider perspective. Take the case of cannibalism, which is of all savage practices the one we find the most horrible and disgusting. We must set aside those cases in which people eat one another for lack of any other meat—as was the case in certain parts of Polynesia. No society is proof, morally speaking, against the demands of hunger. In times of starvation men will eat literally anything, as we saw lately in the Nazi extermination camps.

There remain to be considered what we may call the positive forms of cannibalism—those whose origins are mystical, magical, or religious. By eating part of the body of an ancestor, or a fragment of an enemy corpse, the cannibal hoped to acquire the virtues, or perhaps to neutralise the power, of the dead man. Such rites were often observed with great discretion, the vital mouthful being made up of a small quantity of pulverised organic matter mixed, on occasion, with other forms of food. And even when the element of cannibalism was more openly avowed, we must acknowledge that to condemn such customs on moral grounds implies either belief in a bodily resurrection, which would be compromised by the material destruction of the corpse, or the affirmation of a link between body and spirit, and of the resulting dualism. These convictions are of the same nature as those in the name of which ritual cannibalism is practised, and we have no good reason for preferring the one to the other—all the more so as the disregard for the sanctity of death, with which we reproach the cannibal, is certainly no greater, and indeed arguably much less, than that which we tolerate in our European "anatomy lessons."

BUT ABOVE ALL we must realise that certain of our own usages, if investigated by an observer from a different society, would seem to him similar in kind to the cannibalism which we consider "uncivilised." I am thinking here of our judicial and penitentiary customs. If we were to look at them from outside it would be tempting to distinguish two opposing types of society: those which practise cannibalism—who believe, that is to say, that the only way to neutralise people who are the repositories of certain redoubtable powers, and even to turn them to one's own advantage, is to absorb them into one's own body. Second would come those which, like our own, adopt what might be called anthropœmia (from the Greek *emein*, to vomit). Faced with the same problem, they have chosen the opposite solution. They expel these formidable beings from the body public by isolating them for a time, or for ever, denying them all contact with humanity, in establishments devised for that express purpose. In most of the societies which we would call primitive this custom would inspire the profoundest horror: we should seem to them barbarian in the same degree as we impute to them on the ground of their no-more-than-symmetrical customs.

SOCIETIES which seem to us ferocious may turn out, when examined from another point of view, to have their humane and benevolent sides. Take the Plains Indians of North America: they are doubly significant—first because some of them practised a moderated form of cannibalism, and second because they are one of the few primitive peoples who were endowed with an organised police force. This force, which also had to mete out justice, would never have imagined that the punishments accorded to the guilty could take the form of a severance of social links. An Indian who broke the laws of his tribe would be sentenced to the destruction of all his belongings—his tent and his horses. But at the same time the police became indebted to him and were required, in fact, to compensate him for the harm he had been made to suffer. This restitution put the criminal, once again, in debt to the group, and he was obliged to acknowledge this by a series of gifts which the entire community—including the police—would help him to get together. These reciprocities continued, by way of gifts

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and counter-gifts, until the initial disorder created by the crime and its punishment had been completely smoothed over and order was once again complete.

Not only are such customs more humane than our own, but they are more coherent, even if we are to formulate the problem in terms of modern psychology. It would seem logical that in return for the "infantilisation" of the guilty man which is implied in the notion of punishment, we should also acknowledge that he is entitled to a gratification of some sort. If this is not done, the initial step loses its effectiveness and may even bring about results directly contrary to those hoped for in the first place. The summit of absurdity in this context is to do as we do and treat the guilty simultaneously as children, in that they are meet for punishment, and as grown-ups, in that we refuse them all subsequent consolation. It is grotesque to believe that we have made a "great spiritual advance" simply because, instead of eating our fellow-human beings, we prefer to mutilate them, both physically and morally.

IF ANALYSES of this sort are sincerely and methodically conducted they have two results. First, they encourage us to take a level-headed and unbiased view of customs and ways of life remote from our own—without, however, attributing to them absolute merits such as no society can claim to possess. Second, they dissuade us from taking for granted the "rightness" or "naturalness" of our own customs, as can easily be the case if we know of no others, or know of them only partly and with bias. Anthropological analysis tends, admittedly, to enhance the prestige of other societies and diminish that of our own: in that respect its action is contradictory. But reflection will show, I think, that this contradiction is more apparent than real.

IT HAS SOMETIMES BEEN SAID that only in western society have anthropologists been produced. Therein, it was said, lay its greatness; anthropology might question all its other merits, but here at least was one before which we could not but bow our heads, since, but for that, we ourselves would not exist. But the contrary argument could also be sustained: that if the West has produced anthropologists, it is because it was so tormented by remorse that it had to compare its own image with that of other societies, in the hope that they would either display the same shortcomings or help the West to explain how these defects could have come into being. But even if it is true that the comparison of our our society with all others, present or past, will lead to the collapse of the foundations on which it rests—even so, others will meet the same fate. The general average of which I spoke earlier throws into relief the existence of a few sociological ogres, among whom we ourselves must be numbered.

Nor is this an accident: if it were not that we deserved, and for that matter still deserve, first prize in this grim competition, anthropology would never have come into being; we should have felt no need of it. If anthropology cannot take a detached view of our civilisation, or declare itself not responsible for that civilisation's evils, it is because its very existence is unintelligible unless we regard it as an attempt to redeem it. Yet other societies have shared in the same original sin, though they are doubtless few in number, and fewer still as we descend the ladder of progress. I need cite one instance only: that open wound on the flank of Americanism, the Aztecs. Their maniacal obsession with blood and torture is a universal trait, but comparison allows us to define it in their case as excessive, even if it can be explained in terms of the necessity of taming the fear of death. That obsession puts them on a par with ourselves; for, if they were not alone in their iniquity, they nevertheless stand, as we ourselves stand in other respects, on the side of immoderation.

AND YET THIS SELF-INFLICTED self-condemnation does not mean that we award a first prize for excellence to this or that society, present or past, localised at a determinable point in space or time. That would be a great injustice: for we should be failing to realise that if we had been members of that prize-winning society we might have found it intolerable and condemned it, just as we condemn the one to which we belong today. Is it then the case that anthropology tends to condemn *all* forms of social order, whatever they may be, and to glorify a condition of Nature which can only be corrupted by the establishment of social order?

"Don't trust the man who comes to put things in order," said Diderot, whose position has just been stated. For him the history of our race could be summed up as follows: "Once there was natural Man. Within that natural Man, an artificial Man was later introduced. Between

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the two, war broke out, and will go on raging till life comes to an end." This conception is absurd. Whoever says "Man," says "Language," and whoever says "Language," says "Society." The Polynesians visited by Bougainville (and it was in the *Supplément* to Bougainville's travels that Diderot put forward his theory) lived in society every bit as much as we do. Anyone who questions this is moving counter to the direction in which anthropological analysis would have us go.

TURNING over these problems in my mind, I become convinced that Rousseau's is the only answer to them.

Rousseau is much decried these days; never has his work been so little known; and he has to face, above all, the absurd accusation that he glorified the "state of Nature" for its own sake. (That may have been Diderot's error, but it was never Rousseau's.) What Rousseau said was the exact contrary; and he remains the only man who shows us how to get clear of the contradictions into which his adversaries have led us. Rousseau, of all the *philosophes*, came nearest to being an anthropologist. He never travelled in distant countries, certainly; but his documentation was as complete as it could be at that time and, unlike Voltaire, he brought his knowledge alive by the keenness of his interest in peasant customs and popular thought. Rousseau is our master and our brother, great as has been our ingratitude towards him; and every page I have written could have been dedicated to him, had the object thus proffered not been unworthy of his great memory. For there is only one way in which we can escape the contradiction inherent in the notion of the position of the anthropologist, and that is by reformulating, on our own account, the intellectual procedures which allowed Rousseau to move forward from the ruins left by the *Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité* to the ample design of the *Contrat Social*, of which *Emile* reveals the secret. He it is who showed us how, after we have destroyed every existing order, we can still discover the principles which allow us to erect a new order in their stead.

Never did Rousseau make Diderot's mistake—that of exalting the "natural Man." There is no risk of his confusing the state of Nature with the state of Society; he knows that the latter is inherent in mankind, but that it brings evil with it, and that the question to be solved is whether or not these evils are themselves inherent in that state. We must go beyond the evidence of the injustices of abuses to which the social order gives rise and discover the unshakeable basis of human society.

THERE ARE TWO WAYS in which anthropology contributes to this quest. It shows that that base cannot be found in our own civilisation: of all the societies we can examine, ours is indeed perhaps the one furthest from it. Secondly, by enabling us to distinguish the characteristics common to the majority of human societies, it helps us to constitute a model, to which no society corresponds exactly, but which defines closely the direction in which our investigations should be oriented. Rousseau thought that the image nearest to it, for experimental purposes, was what we now call the neolithic age.

I am inclined to think that he was right. In the neolithic age, Man had already made most of the inventions which are indispensable to his security. We have seen why writing need not be included among these; to say that writing is a double-edged weapon is not a mark of "primitivism;" the cyberneticians of our own day have rediscovered the truth. During the neolithic age Man put himself beyond the reach of food and hunger; he acquired leisure to think; and although he was more or less at the mercy of disease it is not certain that our advances in the field of hygiene have done more than transfer to other mechanisms the responsibility of maintaining a certain measure of demographic equilibrium: the epidemics which contributed to that equilibrium were no more dreadful than the famines and wars of extermination which later took their place.

IN THAT myth-minded age, Man was no more free than he is to-day; but it was his humanness alone which kept him enslaved. As he had only a very restricted control over Nature, he was protected, and to a certain degree emancipated, by the protective cushion of his dreams. As and when these dreams turned into knowledge, so did Man's power increase; this gave us, if I may so put it, the "upper hand" over the universe, and we still take an immense pride in it. But what is it, in reality, if not the subjective awareness that humanity is being progressively more and more sundered from the physical universe? The great determining factors in that universe are no longer acting upon us as redoubtable strangers; rather is their operation not now through the intermediacy of

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thought, as they colonise us in the interests of the silent world whose agents we have now become?

Rousseau was probably right when he held that it would have been better for our happiness if humanity had kept to "the middle ground between the indolence of the primitive state and the questing activity to which we are prompted by our *amour-propre*." That middle state was, he said, "the best for Man;" and only some "ill-boding turn of events" could have caused us to leave it. That turn of events was found in the development of mechanical civilisations—a phenomenon doubly exceptional in that it was first, unique, and second, belated. And yet it remains clear that the middle state of which Rousseau wrote is in no way a primitive condition. It presupposes and tolerates a certain degree of progress; and although no society as yet described corresponds to its privileged image, even if "the example of the savages, who have almost always been found at this point of development, seems to confirm that mankind was designed to remain at it for ever."

THE STUDY OF THESE SAVAGES does not reveal a Utopian state of Nature; nor does it make us aware of a perfect society hidden deep in the forests. It helps us to construct a theoretical model of society which corresponds to none that can be observed in reality, but will help us to disentangle "what in the present nature of Man is original, and what is artificial." It also helps us

> to know closely a state which no longer exists, which may never have existed, which probably never will exist, and of which we must, none the less, have an exact notion if we are to judge our present situation correctly.

For Rousseau's thought, ever in advance of his time, does not dissociate theoretical sociology from those researches in the laboratory, or in the field, which he knew to be necessary. "Natural Man" does not pre-date Society; nor is he outside it. Our task is to rediscover the "natural Man" in his relation to the social state outside which our human condition cannot be imagined; the anthropologist must draw up, therefore, the programme of the experiments which "are necessary if we are to understand natural Man;" and he must "determine the best way of making these experiments within Society itself."

BUT THIS MODEL—and here lies Rousseau's solution—is eternal and universal. Other societies may not be better than our own; even if we believe them to be so, we have no way of proving it. But knowing them better does none the less help us to detach ourselves from our own society. It is not that our society is absolutely evil, or that others are not evil also; but merely that ours is the only society from which we *have* to disentangle ourselves. In doing so, we put ourselves in a position to attempt the second phase of our undertaking: that in which, while not clinging to elements from any one particular society, we make use of one and all of them in order to distinguish those principles of social life which may be applied to the reform of our own customs, and not of those of societies foreign to our own. In relation to our own society, that is to say, we stand in a position of privilege which is exactly contrary to that which I have just described; for our own society is the only one which we can transform and yet not destroy, since the changes which we should introduce would come from within.

THERE IS A RISK, certainly, in placing beyond space and time the model from which we take our inspiration: the risk of underestimating the reality of progress. Our argument is, in brief, that men have always and everywhere undertaken the same task, and assigned to themselves the same object; all that has differed is the means employed.

I must own that this attitude does not at all disturb me; it seems the closest to the facts, as they are revealed to us by history and anthropology; and above all it seems to me to yield results. The zealots of progress run the risk of underestimating, and thus of knowing too little about, the immense riches which our race has accumulated to one side and the other of the narrow furrow on which they keep their eyes fixed. By overvaluing the importance of what has been done in the past, they depreciate what still remains to be done. If our race has concentrated on one task, and one alone—that of building a society in which Man can live—then the sources of strength on which our remote ancestors drew are present also in ourselves. All the stakes are still on the board, and we can take them up at any time we please. Whatever was done, and done badly, can be begun all over again: "The golden age which blind superstition situated behind or ahead of us is *in us*." Human brotherhood acquires a palpable signifi-

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cance when we find our image of it confirmed in the poorest of tribes, and when that tribe offers us an experience which, when joined with many hundreds of others, has a lesson to teach us.

THAT LESSON MAY EVEN COME TO US with a millennary freshness; for, knowing as we do that for thousands of years past mankind has done nothing but repeat itself, we shall attain that noble cast of thought which, transcending all that has been done and re-done, assigns as the starting-point of our reflections that indefinable grandeur which is the mark of true beginnings.

To be a man means, for each of us, membership of a class, a society, a country, a continent, and a civilisation. For those of us who are earth-bound Europeans, our adventurings into the heart of the New World have a lesson to teach us; that the New World was not ours to destroy, and yet we destroyed it; and that no other will be vouchsafed to us. In grasping these truths we come face to face with ourselves. Let us, at any rate, set them out as they first appeared to us, in that place, and that moment in time, when our world lost the chance that was still open to it: that of choosing between its missions.

James Dickey

Facing Africa

These are stone jetties,
And, in the close part of the night,
Connected to my feet by long
Warm, dangling shadows
On the buttressed water,
Boats are at rest.

Beyond, the harbour mouth opens
Much as you might believe
A human mouth would open
To say that all things are a darkness.
I sit believing this
As the boats beneath me dissolve

And shake with a haunted effort
To come into being again,
And my son nods at my side,
Looking out also
Into dark, through the painted
Living shadows of dead-still hulls

Toward where we imagine Africa
To bloom late at night
Like a lamp of sand held up,
A top-heavy hourglass, perhaps,
With its heaped, eternal grains
Falling, falling

In the lower, green part
Which gives off quick, leafy flashes
Like glimpses of lightning.
We strain to encounter that image
Halfway from its shore to ours:
To understand

The undermined glowing of sand
Lifted at midnight
Somewhere far out above water,
The effortless flicker of trees
Where a rumour of beasts moves slowly
Like wave upon wave.

What life have we entered by this?
Here, where our bodies are,
With a green and gold light on his face,
My staring child's hand is in mine,
And in the stone
Fear like a dancing of peoples.

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Middle Eastern Prospects

A Confession of Cautious Optimism

IT NEARLY always looks safe to predict the worst in the Middle East. Judged by Western standards—and it is by Western standards that the Middle Eastern states seek to be judged, however indignant they may sometimes be with us—a certain degree of anarchy and confusion are normal in the political and social life of the region. There are bound to be times when they become worse than normal: that is to be expected; and because that expectation has been with us permanently since the second World War, we have come to look upon the Middle East for at least half a generation as an area where the worst is always imminent. Western diagnoses of the condition of the area consequently tend to vary only from the pessimistic to the very pessimistic. To have formed, on the contrary, a cautiously optimistic view of the prospects of the Middle East and of our own prospects there, as I have done in the course of a recent visit, is likely to earn the approval of no one.

It will be disapproved by the congenital pessimists, who regard the troubles of the Middle East as incurable and every step taken by Western policy as a hideous mistake. It will be disapproved by the politically conscious peoples of the Middle East itself, who are tired of being treated as a kind of *corpus vile* for Western diagnosis and experimentation, and who have no more desire to be an object of Western optimism than of Western pessimism, but only wish to be left to themselves. If they are, politically speaking, the "outs" of the moment, they will bitterly reflect that it is only such complacency on the part of the British that is preventing the "ins" from being brought down (because it is always something on the part of the British that is responsible for everything in the Middle East). If they are the "ins," they will argue that it is only the characteristic blindness of the British to immediate dangers that is preventing them from making a final reckoning with their next-door neighbours—the Israelis, for instance, if they happen to be Arabs, and in subtler and more sophisticated forms *vice versa*. Most of all, an attitude of optimism in present circumstances will offend those, both Europeans and Americans and educated nationalists of the Middle East, who have set their sights highest for the future of the area and desire for it the same fruits of peace and prosperity, the same standards of political order and social welfare, that the West has won for itself.

IT IS WELL, THEN, to qualify what I mean by optimism about the prospects of the Middle East. The nouns need adjectives: it is a *relative* optimism about the *long-term* prospects of the area that I am speaking of. What I imply by "relative" is a comparison with past situations in the history of the area, and also with my own past experiences. (I was last in the Middle East for any length of time in the years 1951–53, when things hardly could have looked worse, with the Anglo-Egyptian crisis over the Suez Canal Zone and the Anglo-Iranian crisis over the oil industry simultaneously at their peak; so that 1960 was virtually bound to look more encouraging by contrast.) What I mean by "long-term" is that I believe the Middle Eastern volcano, on which we have been anxiously perched for so long, may be in process of cooling down, though not that it is extinct. Both adjectives have this significance in common, that the present moment in the Middle East must be

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looked at in its historical perspective. No situation comes into existence ready-made, and in the Middle East more than in any other area of the world one must look at the roots of the present in the past before peering into the crystal-ball for the future.

History in this context means, of course, the history of the West's relations with the Middle East, covering a period slightly longer than the last century-and-a-half—say from Napoleon's landing in Egypt in 1798. It is not necessary to go back to the Pharaohs or Haroun al Raschid, or to Moses or the Achaemenids (though naturally it is often useful to do so). And in talking of the prospects in the Middle East one is talking, of course, by the same token of the prospects of the West, and particularly of Great Britain, in the region as well as of its internal affairs. It may seem to be taking too much for granted to write as if British interests and Middle Eastern interests were one and the same thing, especially when there are so many conflicts between different Middle Eastern interests in the short run. But that is precisely why the optimism with which I regard the prospects is essentially long-term. And I hope it will become apparent why it does not seem to me absurd to identify the long-term interests of the Middle East with the long-term interests of ourselves in the area, however sharply the friction of mutual exasperation at any given moment may indicate the contrary.

HISTORICALLY, Great Britain has always had one consistent object in the Middle East. It has not been primarily to dominate the area, though that has sometimes been (or been thought to be) an incidental necessity. The primary object has always been to ensure that no potentially hostile power should so dominate the area as to be able to exclude us from it. That was what we fought the French and the Russians for in the 19th century. That was what we fought the Germans and Turks and Italians for in the 20th century. It was also what we would, if necessary, have fought the Red Army for, and what we formed the Baghdad Pact (now the Central Treaty Organisation) to defend. It made no difference whether the potentially hostile power came from outside the area or from within it: the Albanian dynasty of Egypt, for instance, had to be resisted in the 1840s just as President Nasser of the United Arab Republic had to be in the 1950s, always with the same object in mind. The Ottoman Empire was only in appearance an exception—a dominant power in the area with which we remained on conspicuously friendly terms between that "untoward incident" in 1827 when we sank its fleet in Navarino Bay and the foolish miscalculation of 1914 which brought it into the first World War against us. But the apparent exception was due only to the fact that the Ottoman Empire had ceased to be a great power at all, and its weakness helped to promote British influence rather than to hinder it.

For more than a century-and-a-half, then, the object of British policy has been the same. But there came a point, fairly recently in the story, when the reason why it was important to prevent any other power from dominating the Middle East to our detriment underwent a transformation—indeed, a revolution. Up till that point, the important thing about the Middle East was that it lay across the shortest and easiest route from Britain to India, as well as other places further east. The defence of the Indian Empire dominated British foreign policy outside Europe throughout the latter part of the 19th century, and India in its turn made an essential contribution to the defence of its own line of communication through the Middle East. These were the considerations which led the British Government to acquire our first colonial possession in the Middle East, at Aden in 1839; and to buy the Khedive of Egypt's shares in the Suez Canal Company in 1875; and to take over Cyprus from the Sultan of Turkey in 1878; and to occupy Egypt in 1881, as Kinglake had prophesied a generation before in *Eothen*:

> the Englishman, straining far over to hold his loved India, will plant a firm foot on the banks of the Nile and sit in the seats of the Faithful. . . .

In all such transactions it was on India that Britain's eyes were fixed, especially in the days of our only truly Middle Eastern Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, who incidentally forecast the occupation of Cyprus in *Tancred* a generation in advance.

The turning-point had been reached even before the Indian Empire was dissolved. To-day the first importance of the Middle East lies not in its position on the map, but in the minerals it contains: its geology, no longer its geography. Its position still counts too, of course: it is still at the cross-roads of the routes from Europe to Asia and from Russia to Africa; and in future the latter route, from north to south, may be even more important than the historical route

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from east to west and *vice versa*. But for the time being what makes the Middle East indispensable to the British interest is oil. As a simple example, the tiny shaikhdom of Kuwait, a British protectorate, at the head of the Persian Gulf, contains larger proved oil reserves than the entire North American continent, and supplies between 40 and 50 per cent of the oil consumed in Britain every day. Middle Eastern oil is equally essential to the functioning of our industrial economy, to our defence, to our balance of payments, and to our investment income. The Kuwait Investment Board, for instance, which handles the royalties drawn by the Shaikh on the oil produced from his patch of desert, is the largest single investor on the London Stock Exchange.

SUCH WAS THE economic revolution brought about by the discovery of oil in the Middle East. The beginning of the revolution can be almost precisely dated, because although the presence of oil had long been known, it was the strike at Masjid-i-Suleiman in 1908 which proved the first foundation of a great industry; and it was within five years thereafter that Mr. Winston Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, persuaded the British Government to convert the Royal Navy from burning coal to burning oil and to buy a majority shareholding in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, as *B.P.* was then called. From that date both our national economy and our national defence were indissolubly linked with the Middle East. Throughout the first World War, and even the second, it was still as part of our system of communications that the Middle East mainly mattered, but to-day the predominance of oil is undisputed. If the Suez Canal is still a vital transport artery, it is for the transport of oil that it is vital. The revolution in our economic relations with the Middle East is now complete. But this was not the only revolution: there were others, no less decisive, going on in other contexts at the same time.

In the first place, in addition to the transformation of the Western interest in the Middle East, there was the revolutionary impact of the West on the material way of life of the area. The Middle East owes to the West the foundations of all the changes and improvements in its standard of living during the last century: communications, industry, medicine, education, and modern administration. The process of development goes back, of course, well beyond the discovery of oil, but it was the material wealth which oil produced that made possible a great acceleration of the pace of development and an expansion of its scale. This is the subject of the more interesting part of Mr. Michael Ionides' recent book,[1] written with first-hand authority by one of the only two foreign members of the Development Board in Iraq, after many years' service as an irrigation engineer in different parts of the Middle East. But his book is also a reminder that the problems of development are by no means only technical, even in one of the richest of the oil-producing Arab states. The major part of the book is concerned not with technology or economics, but with politics: the creation of Israel and the Baghdad Pact, for instance, which in Mr. Ionides' view were two of the principal blunders of British policy. To these I shall return. The immediate point, in the present context, is the danger which arose from the fact that the benefits of the oil revolution were very unevenly distributed: both between the different states of the Middle East and within each of the oil-producing countries themselves.

THE UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION of oil among the Middle Eastern states was one of the accidental by-products of the arbitrary way in which the area was carved up after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1918. In that process the Middle East was divided into states which have oil, like Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia; those which have little or none, but which lie across the natural routes of transport, like Egypt and Syria; and those which have no benefit from oil at all, like Israel or the Yemen. In fact, the Middle East was divided into the "haves" and the "have-nots," and that division lies at the root of many perennial quarrels, especially over frontiers in areas where the rival rulers expect oil to be found one day. The dispute over the Buraimi Oasis villages between the King of Saudi Arabia, the Shaikh of Abu Dhabi, and the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, is a contemporary case in point. The break-up of the Middle East into nation-states and smaller political units had other economic consequences as well, few of them satisfactory. It divided the region into states suffering from over-population and others suffering from under-population; it created sovereign units whose economies were not complementary but competitive; it deprived the area of the possibility of a comprehensive and in-

[1] *Divide and Lose*, GEOFFREY BLES. 21S.

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tegrated system of communications; it compelled people to recognise frontiers which had never had any meaning for them. Many Arabs are inclined to feel—and many Englishmen, including Mr. Ionides, would probably sympathise with them—that the frustration of Arab unification at the time of independence was a notable disservice to the economy of the region.

FROM the point of view of the highly educated generation of younger Arab nationalists (a class which incidentally owes its existence to the Western impact on the Middle East), an equal disservice in the economic and social context was the preservation of an archaic type of society under quasi-feudal hereditary rulers. In the oil-producing countries especially, it is this system that has prevented the benefits of the new national wealth reaching beyond a very narrow section of the community. Saudi Arabia is the most notorious case of economic inequity; Kuwait, under British tutelage, perhaps the best example of what can be done for the public good. Iraq was in the process of setting an increasingly good example in the days before the 1958 revolution, thanks in large part to men like Mr. Ionides and his predecessors. In Iran a good example of social conscience is being shown by the Shah, but not widely followed by his wealthier subjects. An interesting demonstration of the fact that the Iranian people in general enjoyed little benefit from the wealth created by the oil royalties was that when Dr. Musaddiq brought the oil industry to a halt in 1951, the effect on the general public of three years' deprivation of the main source of national income was negligible—because they had never derived any benefit from it anyway. In general it can be said that even where an attempt is being made to introduce 20th-century Western conceptions of economic and social justice, things are happening far too slowly. That is why there were revolutions in Egypt and Iraq; and that is why it seems to be only a matter of time before something equally drastic happens in, for instance, Saudi Arabia, some of the states on the Persian Gulf, and perhaps also Iran.

THESE TWO ANOMALIES—the uneven distribution of oil resources between the Middle Eastern States and the inequitable distribution of wealth within them—show how closely interlocked the economic revolution has been with the political and social revolution which has been going on at the same time, and even longer. The political and social changes are likewise imperfect and incomplete; and again the Western, and particularly the British, impact is largely responsible and even more largely held to blame. Independence did indeed come to the region after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the first World War. But it was not independence of a kind which completely satisfied anybody, and in most cases it was not accompanied by a determined attempt, such as the younger generation of nationalists desired, to modernise the social systems which survived from earlier centuries. Middle Eastern nationalism thus became the enemy of the West in two respects. Firstly, from the Arab point of view it was the West that stultified the grand design of a united Arab Empire by carving up the Arabic-speaking provinces of the Ottoman Empire into a multiplicity of little nation-states; while from the incompatible viewpoint of Jewish nationalism, the West failed to go far enough or fast enough in the direction of realising their National Home. Secondly, the West was looked upon as the natural ally of the archaic régimes of the Hashimites, the Saudis, and other royal dynasties which were delaying the access of the Middle East to the political ideas and social standards of the 20th century. Once the other European powers—the Italians, Germans, and French—had been successfully excluded from the Middle East by the end of the second World War, the whole odium of such sentiments was concentrated upon the British.

THE ROLE of the West, and particularly of Great Britain, in the generation since the first World War has been the subject of innumerable books, few of them sympathetic. A recent example, told from the point of view of a Middle Eastern nationalist, is Dr. Zeine N. Zeine's description of the attempt to create a Syrian kingdom under King Feisal after Allenby and Lawrence had liberated Damascus, and the frustration of that attempt by the French.[2] From a pro-Zionist point of view, the story of the establishment and eventual breakdown of the Palestine Mandate as told by a clever Gentile apologist, Mr. Richard Crossman, shows how these things should be managed.[3] Mr. Crossman attributes the emergence of Israel as an indepen-

[2] *The Struggle for Arab Independence*. Khayat's, Beirut, 40s.

[3] *A Nation Reborn*. Hamish Hamilton, 12s. 6d. *"Chaim Weizmann"* and *"Palestine Regained"* appeared in ENCOUNTER, June and July, 1960.

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dent state not merely to Chaim Weizmann's genius but also to the follies of British policy, particularly under Ernest Bevin. On the whole, the British do not emerge badly from Dr. Zeine's book: they were at least trying to do the decent thing in Syria, had they not been diplomatically defeated by the French. It is not the Syrian who has the hardest words for the British but the two Englishmen, Mr. Crossman and Mr. Ionides. But whereas the fatal mistake of British policy in Mr. Crossman's eyes was that it was anti-Zionist, to Mr. Ionides, looking out on British policy from Baghdad, it now appears to be virtually dictated by an exaggerated susceptibility for Israel's interests.

It is a striking fact, well exemplified by the comparison of these three books, that the bitterest criticisms of British policy (at least, those that we read in English) usually come from Englishmen. Dr. Zeine's book shows a milder appreciation of our faults as well as a deeper sense of history, without which it is useless to attempt to study the contemporary Middle East; and perhaps the two things are connected. It is not enough merely to resist the obvious temptation to imagine that history begins where we come in. In the Middle East at least we must be prepared to go back generations in order to find the springs of action taken in our own day; and even the most sympathetic Western observers of the region often fail to do so. One of the most fruitful causes of our present troubles in the Middle East, for instance, and one which occupies the centre of Dr. Zeine's canvas, is the fact that during the first World War the British Government became unwittingly committed to mutually incompatible promises affecting the same area of the Levant to the French, the Arabs, and the Jews. Even if those promises could be reconciled in pure logic, which is doubtful, no one was inclined to be purely logical about them. Inevitably someone—perhaps everyone—was bound to feel that they had been let down. It is curious that neither Mr. Crossman nor Mr. Ionides mentions this cardinal circumstance at all.

In contrast to the view widely held in Great Britain, that everything that happens in the Middle East is due to British folly, there is the equally absurd view held in the Middle East that everything that happens there is due to the British Government's Machiavellian cunning. I have heard this explanation propounded of such unlikely events as Dr. Musaddiq's nationalisation of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, President Nasser's seizure of the Suez Canal, and President Kassem's *coup* in Baghdad in 1958. Such interpretations can only be justified by a devious and tenuous logic starting from the premiss, which is correct, that the West introduced the seeds of nationalism into the Middle East a century ago, leading to the conclusion, which is absurd, that the West must have intended all their consequences. Perhaps it is true that the long-term consequences of bringing European ideas to the Middle East were inevitable; certainly it is true that the Western carriers of these ideas—administrators, teachers, missionaries, businessmen, soldiers, doctors, etc.—could not have withheld or suppressed the ideas on which their civilisation was based without being untrue to themselves. But to argue that a total responsibility thereby falls on their shoulders is both to belittle the indigenous forces at work in the Middle East and to exempt Middle Eastern leaders, like children, from all responsibility, which is bad both for them and their followers. It looks as if even President Nasser, the master of anti-Western propaganda, has begun to learn this lesson.

A juster appreciation of the mutual interaction of Europe and the Middle East is certainly needed. The European contribution is in danger of being made to appear wholly material by its admirers, or wholly evil by its critics. What in fact Europe provided was a model to copy and a dynamic fertilisation of ideas; but many of the ideas were already there, and some elements of the model (such as parliamentary democracy) were rejected. (The only democracies left in the Middle East to-day are Israel and Cyprus, both virtually European states.) It was the formulæ rather than the forms, let alone the content, of Middle Eastern nationalism that came from Europe. How could it be otherwise among people who had mostly never felt what it was like to be a nation before they were offered the idea of nationalism? Certainly the roots of what we call "nationalism in the Middle East" were not of foreign origin. The Jews had had the idea for several thousand years, and they had the further advantage of the divine promise of a particular stretch of ground. The Young Turks and the Persian Constitutionalists were not simply parroting European slogans, and they had the advantage of being already independent

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peoples, in the sense that their rulers, however odious to them, were at least their own compatriots. With the Arabic-speaking peoples it was different. They had been subjugated for centuries, so it was natural for the leading role in Arab nationalism to locate itself on the stage of the first Arabic-speaking land to gain partial independence, which was Egypt. It is in Egypt that we find the leading names of early Arab nationalism—Ahmad Arabi, Mustafa Kamil, Saad Zaghlul—and it was to Egypt that others gravitated from other parts of the Middle East, like Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani or the Syrian Faris Nimr. President Nasser has inherited the mantle of leadership to-day, not only because he was the pioneer of a new style of nationalist revolution but also because his country's moral and intellectual leadership is readily accepted elsewhere in the Middle East.

In writing of the "origins of Egyptian nationalism," Mr. J. M. Ahmed is therefore writing something of general and not merely local application.[4] He is also writing of something which is not merely marginal to the political history of the region, for as he rightly points out, "the seemingly empirical basis for the actions of the present Egyptian leaders and their political vocabulary" stems from the philosophers and poets of an earlier generation. For the same reason, in comparing two recent biographies of President Nasser, by Mr. Joachim Joesten[5] and Mr. Robert St. John,[6] it is fair to judge the former the more complete and perceptive of the two because, although it is substantially shorter, Mr. Joesten begins his study not with the birth of his hero but with the tragic rising of Ahmad Arabi and the "intoxicating visions" conjured up by Mustafa Kamil. He quotes President Nasser as saying that

> the seeds of revolution were not only in me, I found them also in the hearts of a great many others. . . . These seeds were already in us when we were born, implanted by a previous generation.

Mr. Ahmed's book throws a brilliant and scholarly light on the process which President Nasser was there describing, but in order to appreciate the full force of the ideological basis of "Nasserism" it is necessary to turn to his own work, *The Philosophy of the Revolution*. (Mr. St. John correctly explains that President Nasser himself wrote very little of it, but that does not affect its accuracy as a vehicle of his ideas.) There the startled reader will find forecast the intended climax of the process whose origins Mr. Ahmed has so conscientiously traced: a sort of *Pax Egyptiaca* in which President Nasser will sit at the centre of three overlapping spheres of influence—the Arab world, Africa, and all Islam. Thus would be realised, from within the Middle East itself, the rise of just such a potentially hostile hegemony over the area as British policy has always been designed to avert.

SUCH AN INTERPRETATION of Nasserism is of course grossly exaggerated. In the first place, it gives too precise a political definition to the woolly and visionary language which President Nasser employs. In the second place, it assumes that a unification of the Middle East under President Nasser, if it came about, would necessarily be hostile to British interests: an assumption which would not have been made before 1956 and is at best highly questionable five years later. (It is the fallacy which Mr. Ionides intended to expose in his title, *Divide and Lose*.) President Nasser may well one day come to be looked on again as the best ruler of Egypt we can hope for. It is unlikely, on the other hand, that either he or anyone else in the foreseeable future will succeed in uniting the Arab world into a single super-state: that was demonstrated by the test-case of Iraq after the revolution of 1958, which, so far from adding a new member to the United Arab Republic, only replaced one rival to Egyptian hegemony with another. Arab unity will continue to be the universal slogan of Arab nationalists, and it will remain a powerful idea inspiring future generations throughout the Arabic-speaking world. But it is hardly likely to become a political reality. That is due to the divided loyalties of the Arabs, not to the machinations of the British, though I fear we shall continue to carry the blame. We have, unfortunately, arrived at a position where our power to influence events in the Middle East is small (though it is still assumed to be vast), and at the same time our dependence on the area, particularly for our oil supplies, is greater than ever.

ONE LAST EXAMPLE may be given of the revolution in our relationship with the area in the last generation, which is in some ways the most

[4] *The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism*. OUP for RIIA. 25s.
[5] *Nasser: The Rise to Power*. Odhams. 21s.
[6] *The Boss: The Story of Gamal Abdel Nasser*. McGraw-Hill. $5.95.

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disquieting of all. Its context is defence. In the days when we had the Suez Canal Zone Base, the "defence of the Middle East" meant that we sat in the centre of the region and guarded its periphery against external attack by other great powers. To-day we have no such base, and our strategy assumes the improbability of any such attack. Cyprus simply provides an advanced post for "fire-brigade" operations against local outbreaks (such as Jordan in 1958); and the Central Treaty Organisation, since the defection of Iraq, is little more than a device for warning the Russians against rash adventures and for holding together the member-states against subversion. Such military, naval and air force stations as we still have are all on the outer periphery of the area: Libya, Cyprus, Aden, Bahrain, and one or two others. In comparison with the days of the Indian Empire (and more particularly the Indian Army) our capacity to influence the Middle East by force is virtually extinct, as the failure of the Anglo-French operation against Egypt in 1956 sufficiently showed. The elimination of Western military power has had the natural consequence of making local revolution easier, and equally naturally the leadership of such revolutions has often rested with the indigenous officer-class, which is everywhere among the most intelligent and vigorous of the new strata brought to the surface by the Western impact on the Middle East. That is why so many military *coups* have occurred in the last decade in Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, the Sudan, and Iraq, among the Arab states; and in Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey on the non-Arab periphery.

WHAT THEN, after all, are the grounds for even the cautious optimism which I expressed at the beginning? They lie not in any theory that the Middle East is entering upon the peace of those who have no history, but in two fundamental changes which have taken place in the last decade: one particular to the Middle East and one general but of particular application. The first is the emergence of a continuing surplus of oil-production in the world. The excess of supply over demand in 1959 was estimated at 30–40 million tons. In 1960 the potential excess was of the order of 250 million tons, though of course such a surplus would not have been actually produced since it was not needed. The change from a seller's to a buyer's market in oil was signalised by the reduction of the posted price of crude oil last summer, which provoked angry outbursts from the oil-producing states; but it produced no effective counter-action on their part, because none was possible.

In 1951 Dr. Musaddiq thought that he could bring the West to reason by stopping the flow of oil. The fact that he could not succeed (because plenty more oil could be obtained elsewhere, notably from Kuwait) was the most important lesson of the post-war years in the Middle East; and what is even more important, the lesson was learned, as was shown by the care taken by the Iraqi revolutionaries in 1958 to ensure, when they took over, that the flow of their national oil did not stop for so much as twenty-four hours. The upshot is that there seems to be a trend towards a calmer and more rational calculation of mutual interest between Western Europe and the Middle East. The incentives to blackmail on the one side and coercion on the other are gradually vanishing, and growing stability is likely to be the result.

The other fundamental change is the greatly diminished risk of war since the arrival of the nuclear stalemate. It is not merely that the great powers are clearly determined to avoid a head-on collision with each other, for the main risk in the Middle East has long been primarily one of local clashes between neighbouring rivals, such as Israel and the Arabs. The point is rather that to-day the great powers have a better chance of stopping even that kind of clash. They must be presumed to wish to do so, lest such a local incident should spread and ultimately involve them all willy-nilly. Thanks to the nature of modern weapons, they have fortunately to-day not only the wish but the capacity to prevent or contain local clashes. For even the so-called conventional weapons are to-day so complicated and expensive that no small power can afford to manufacture a complete range for itself; therefore they buy them from the great powers; and since they require a continuing supply of ammunition, spare parts, and technicians to enable them to use the weapons, the receiving powers thereby concede to the supplying powers the capacity to halt any military adventure which they might otherwise feel tempted to undertake. It is not too much to say that no Middle Eastern power to-day could fight a war for a week without the sanction of one or other of the great powers; and that is precisely what they are unlikely ever to get. The result has been seen in at least half a dozen crises in the last few years, of a kind which a

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generation ago would almost certainly have led first to a local war and might then have spread into a general war; but they have had no such results in present-day circumstances. The Israeli attack on Egypt in 1956; the Turko-Syrian crisis in 1957; the upheavals in Jordan and Lebanon at the time of the Iraq revolution in 1958: all these, and other threats to security, which petered out without consequences, are examples of the changed trend of the times.

On this hypothesis, even the much-canvassed threat of Communism need not be taken too tragically. Strongly left-wing governments, which will be called Communist, will no doubt continue to come to power, and others will oscillate towards Communism and back again as before. But it does not follow that their countries will turn into Soviet satellites in the East European sense, any more than Egypt or Syria did in 1957. To control such a satellite has never yet been possible for the Soviet government except in cases where they can, if necessary, move in the Red Army overland to bring it to heel: that is why the Soviet Empire has only expanded by bounds from one land-frontier to the next. Such a danger would only arise for the Arabic-speaking world if Turkey and Iran had first been yielded to the Communists, which is what the Central Treaty Organisation now serves to prevent. It is reasonable to suppose that the Soviet Union would not accept the risk of military action directed towards the Middle East. At present, indeed, the Soviet government is hardly in a position (or even seemingly in a mood) to present itself to the Middle East in the guise of a saviour. On the contrary, by emerging in recent years as a producer and exporter of oil, it has come to look like an unscrupulous rival to many of the Arab states. If Communists ever come to power among them, they are likely to be of an individual brand, like Tito rather than true satellites, and by no means unmanageable in their dealings with the West.

These, then, are the reasons for a qualified hopefulness. To argue that the Middle Eastern volcano is cooling down is not to suggest that it will never erupt again; only that its eruptions are likely to be less and less serious, and very unlikely to be catastrophic. The age of revolutions, assassinations, and subversion is not over; but their consequences can be more easily restricted and contained, as witness the examples of the Turkish *coup d'état*, the crisis between Egypt and Iran, and the murder of the Jordanian Prime Minister last summer. Many intractable problems remain: the Arab-Israeli frontiers, for instance, and the Palestinian refugees, and the future sovereignty of the Persian Gulf. But the cost of a radical upheaval to solve them is too great for any of those concerned to face. Either, then, they will be left to time to cure, or they will come to be accepted as incurable and therefore necessarily endurable. In either case the overall pattern of the Middle East looks likely to be not very different a generation hence from what it is to-day, even if important and perhaps revolutionary changes take place within its component parts.

By a mere process of elimination, the *status quo* appears to have a better prospect than any alternative state of affairs. Although it will long remain possible to believe that the worst is always imminent, it seems to me also possible to believe that it may never happen.

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Jon Silkin

The Measure

We all cry for love;
But what if we get it? To hold
In sex, and affection,
The adored human creature
Making of both a unit
In love, and procreate,
Which is the end of love,
Drops one small image into
A widening universe.
Man's love disintegrates
In the spaces void of him;
And gradually he comes
To know that he is small.
What is man's love? To hold
Into despair the loved creature,
And propagate an image
Is the utmost. Beyond his tides
The chronic invalids
Of broken universes
Wait in derision on man.
Yet he was formed to love.
Earth cries, sun cries,
With the stark, hapless Gods
Phenomenal of matter
In space, to this end.
But when man reaches this
And grows into himself,
He dwindles to his size.
His spaces melt into him
He occupies no area.
Love then is the space of destruction,
And but for the harmonies
Of despair, he is nothing.
Weep, then, to be a stone
Or a cold animal
In servitude to something
Other than consciousness
Which love brings; since that shape
Or measure, in awareness
Through love of what we are,
Is those spaces death is.

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THEATRE

Shoes and Apron-Strings

By Nigel Dennis

GREAT events, we are told, can be judged coolly only after many years; but it would be absurd to stay silent for more than a few weeks after a theatrical battle: beyond that, who would remember why so much gore ran in the gutters or which warriors' corpses were thrown to the curs of Shaftesbury Avenue? Everything appears gigantic in the theatre, and the fury of theatrical battle is so hot and involves such a large percentage of the population that we cannot expect it to blaze for long: there is just one frightful clash of arms and then everything goes back to where it was before. Aristophanes began the recent quarrel over the "new drama" by attacking the novelties of Euripides: probably the quarrel has never stopped entirely, and during the last seventy-five years it has never stopped at all. The most decisive of these repetitive battles, at least for us, was the great Shaw-Ibsen massacre, wherein countless drawing-rooms were razed and a hundred thousand innocents forced to choose between facing the facts of life and looking old-fashioned. This battle was decisive not because a decision was obtained but because it won "new drama" the right to exist at all: ever since then the right has been taken for granted and the only issue has been one of quality—whether a "new drama" author is any good or not. Anyone who cares to read the nasty remarks that Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists made about one another's work will see that Mr. Noel Coward is being entirely traditional and correct when he denies quality to our present novelties, giving as one of his reasons his belief that "the first allegiance of a young playwright should be not to his political convictions, nor to his moral or social conscience, but to his talent." To this, Mr. Kenneth Tynan has replied: "This wins my medal for the false antithesis of the month; for what if the author's 'talent' is inseparable from his conscience and convictions, as in the best writers it is?"

Lord Cardigan, we know, failed to silence the guns in the Charge of the Light Brigade because he galloped right past them in his zeal: both Mr. Coward and Mr. Tynan seem to have spoilt their charges in the same way. Mr. Coward, in his determination to put talent first, does seem to say that the ideal author is most likely to be found in the common burglar. After all, it is immensely hard for even the most callous author not to let some sort of conscience sway his allegiance to his talent: the mere fact that he is capable of allegiance shows that his conscience cannot be made to stand up one moment and lie down the next, like a mere dog. Even those Italianate Englishmen who wrote the Jacobean plays may have been convinced that what England needed was some good bursts of invigorating incest, homicide, garrotting, and other Renaissance stimulants: when a writer is determined to get as far away as he can from Spenser, there is no saying what effect this conviction will have upon his talent: he will put it to bed with his sister as an act of faith. Indeed, the point where conscience ends and box-office appeal begins is often so hard to find that Mr. Coward himself cannot pin it down: his articles may have ended with the author's first allegiance going to his talent, but they began with it going entirely to his audience.

Mr. Tynan's position is much stronger, and one questions it only because it is so inexorably in line with what intellectuals have been arguing ever since Shaw began. Far from defending his own drama as "new," Shaw insisted that it was the oldest in the world—mere repetition, with overtones borrowed from opera, of the open debate on social and moral problems that began with Aeschylus, Aristophanes and Euripides. It is immensely difficult to fault this argument—which was very improperly dismissed as typically Shavian and paradoxical. Moreover, as one follows the theatre up through the centuries, the Shavian argument for the play of debate becomes stronger rather than weaker. The morality plays were not so called for nothing; they *are* morality plays. When a new drama comes on the scene, one of its first acts is to

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defy the moral teachings of the old drama, substituting for the glories of Heaven the earthly splendours of Tamburlaine and the demi-godhood of Faustus—while the author himself dines out on such Nietzschean immoralisms as "That Christ deserved better to die than Barabbas" and "That all protestantes ar hipocriticall Asses." Indeed, one may say confidently that conscience and conviction are absent from the theatre only when the censor is stronger than the playwright. Once the muzzle is taken off the playwright and used to gag the censor, conscience and conviction begin to bark again. There is such a huge host of barkers that it would be tedious to list them; one suggests their diversity alone by mentioning Marlowe, Schiller, Hugo, Verdi, and Ibsen.

WHAT we *can* do is ask if it is not possible for even "the best writers" to lay their consciences and convictions aside when it pleases them to do so? At a distance, of course, it is hard to say exactly how much conscience or conviction *was* involved in an old play: we can see that there is a great deal in *Antigone*, but what of *Oedipus Rex*?: is the author not more interested simply in the legend and the hero than in any moral conclusions he can draw from them? Mr. Robert Bolt, coming in against Mr. Coward, tells us that *The Importance of Being Earnest* has an improving effect on the mind, but surely this useful purpose was not intended by the author? And what, say, of *Hedda Gabler*? "It is impossible," says William Archer, "to extract any sort of general idea from it;" and Ibsen himself more than agrees, saying: "It was not my desire to deal in this play with so-called problems. What I principally wanted to do was to depict human beings, human emotions, and human destinies upon a groundwork of certain of the social conditions and principles of the present day." We may, if we please, ignore the first sentence of this statement and attend only to the last words of the second. But is it to our advantage to do so? We have all the freedom we want nowadays to express our consciences and convictions. Surely we can tolerate the idea that a play can be very impersonal, very free from individual convictions, and still be a play of the first order? It would be a pity to give the impression that an intellectual, "progressive" position asks that we always try to say exactly the opposite of whatever is said by Mr. Coward or Mr. Rattigan. There is no need for the critic to sink to the level of a common Member of Parliament. If he scorns his enemies, he should not allow them to dictate the retorts he makes to them.

The impersonal method of writing a play does exist, and not only in the form of drawing-room comedy. It is a method in which the author's principal pleasure comes from exploring and describing characters with whom he is not connected either by conscience or conviction. This method has become so prettified and skimpy in the last seventy-five years that we can hardly believe it was ever valid and robust. Yet Hazlitt, who shared entirely our own liberalism, still took for granted that a play could be both important and impersonal. *The Characters in Shakespeare's Plays* is so called because it appraises a dramatist's characters with more interest than bias. Hazlitt spoke of these characters as if they were independent human beings. He marvelled, as many others have done, at their number and their variety. He never supposed that any one of them was tied directly to the author's apron-strings and spoke for the author's conscience and convictions. Indeed, he could *not* have supposed so, because no way has ever been found of impersonating in one author characters as different as Timon, Lear, Hamlet, Othello, and Coriolanus. We, of course, enjoying and insisting upon a strict personal relation in literary matters, have done our best to force Shakespeare into line; with him out of step, our march is much less impressive. We have given him titles and sent him to court, so as to force him into closer psychological relations with princes and courtiers. We have proved that he was half a dozen authors combining under one name, and have thus provided his diversity with six unconsciouses instead of a mere one. We have proved that when he wrote about Romans he was writing about Elizabethans—and we have gone to all these pains because it hurts us to believe that our best writer just looked for characters and situations that could be well developed in a play. Moreover, he seems to have been more interested in following his characters than in making his characters follow him.

THERE was nothing odd about this method. It seems to have lived very happily side by side with its opposite number—the more-personal method of weaving talent with convictions. Such a play as Chapman's *The Revenge of Bussy D'Amboise* seems personal only in respect of the grand manner in which the author liked to write—and it is worth noting that when the dramatists of that time attacked one another it was for faults of style, for stiffness or hyperbole, rather than for improprieties of social conviction. All of them might share the fate of Cinna, and die simply because they wrote badly: oh, how just; oh, how admirable! No amount of argument can force much conscience or conviction into such plays as *Arden of Feversham*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, and *The Duchess of Malfi*: fashion, cast of mind, personality entered

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in undoubtedly, but on the whole it seems as if the characters' prowess, stature, and fate were the first allegiance of the dramatist. In fact, it is this very impersonality—this recognition of a character's right to a self of his own—that often distresses us when the plays are revived to-day. We cannot face the murderers of the Duchess: they are too much themselves. They and their sort roam unchecked in too much melodrama, which affronts our intelligence, our conscience, our scorn of box-office values. The dramatist is not personally engaged: he is telling a story about characters who are independent of himself —outlaws and rough-riders whom he refuses to control. Even Hazlitt found Coriolanus a bit too much for his liberal stomach—as if there were something morally improper in a character at once so completely himself and so completely on the "wrong" side. More recently, Mr. Laurence Kitchin has condemned Volumnia as "the worst kind of aggressive matriarch" and an "old harridan." Surely this is too personal a view to take? Volumnia is the supposed mother of a legendary Roman general. She is not Mr. Kitchin's mother. In fact, she is just Lady Bracknell, though in a more heroic camp.

> "The best truth and the highest spirit that I have been able to produce," wrote Trollope, were the product of those hours when "I have been able to imbue myself thoroughly with the characters I have had in hand. I have wandered alone among the rocks and woods, crying at their grief, laughing at their absurdities, and thoroughly enjoying their joy. I have been impregnated with my own creations till it has been my only excitement to sit with the pen in my hand, and drive my team before me at as quick a pace as I could make them travel."

These words make good sense to any writer who has known the joy of making characters that never existed before—characters that give the glorious illusion of following their own laws and of not having come from a personal brain at all. It can be argued quite correctly that their independence *is* an illusion; nonetheless, what matters is that the illusion has been attempted deliberately by the author and has succeeded in convincing his public. We know that Trollope's political novels came out of his personal experience, but from the start of these novels we recognise in their hero, Phineas Finn, a character that seems to have been freed from his author's apron-strings and allowed to roam the world in his own way. The same remarkable liberty, like that of a bird flying into sight and out again, is to be found in characters as different, say, as James's Princess Casamassima and Brecht's Azdak: in the last-named case we are left astonished at what seems to be a miraculous apparition, compared with which the other characters in the same play are cage-birds, sufficient but not exciting. The same independence is upheld absolutely by Hedda Gabler, who seems able to defy even her own author the right to lay a finger on her. And surely this is the most desirable condition a character can reach—even if the results are upsetting to an author's conscience and convictions? We know that Milton stepped into Satan's shoes and was swept off his feet; but what person in his right mind wishes that Satan had been forced to step into Milton's?

It is possible, of course, for a dramatist to have an axe to grind and still manage not to mutilate his characters with it. Tartuffe is a fine example of a character that is able to carry his author's convictions without ever giving the impression that the author's convictions are carrying him; but this triumph has been won only because the author has been wise enough to see that so complete a charlatan would be entirely incomplete if he were made without sincerity. The humorist, in fact, is always at liberty to free his characters from his personal bondage without fearing that his point, or message, will be weakened. The trouble starts only when the author's conscience and convictions become so hard and grim that he dare not allow his characters to lift their noses from his chalked lines for more than an occasional moment. It is then that talent disappears entirely from the scene, because conscience and conviction are denying it the right to go where it will and limiting the dramatist's freedom of thought. It is then that party platitudes and self-conscious pieties tend to fall like stones from the mouths of characters that are cold and dead—and that remain so regardless of how much vehemence the opinionated author tries to pump into them.

Oddly enough, no such weight of personal opinion seems to be crushing the latest "new drama," which is more a mixture of varying modes. M. Genet, for instance, *does* have a conscience—and writes best when he forgets about it (as in Act I of *The Balcony* and *The Maids*). Mr. Tennessee Williams is harrowed by an Orphic bogey, but one would hardly call this a conscience, or even a conviction. Mr. Pinter steers by an old French compass and uses no conscience at all; Mr. Simpson likes impractical jokes; Mr. Beckett has no father to guide him; M. Sartre points the way; Mr. Rattigan avoids thought, like Cæsar shrinking from Cassius; Mr. Bolt thinks gently and Mr. Logue roughly. Everything, in fact, is where it usually is—that is to say, conscience or no conscience, quantity outstrips quality just as it did in Shakespeare's day and just as it will do every day. So why did this controversy begin? By now, another week has passed, so we have completely forgotten.

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FILM

The Mystique of Ingmar Bergman

By Caroline Blackwood

A SELF-STYLED Great Illusionist, Ingmar Bergman, even when commenting on his own work creates some illusion of apology.

> I have worked it out that if I see a film which has a running time of sixty minutes, I sit through twenty-seven minutes of complete darkness. When I show a film I am guilty of deceit. I am using an apparatus which is constructed to take advantage of human weakness. An apparatus with which I can sway my audience in a highly emotional manner. Thus I am either an impostor, or in the case when the audience is willing to be taken in, a conjuror. I perform tricks with a conjuring apparatus so expensive and so wonderful that any performer in History would have given anything to make use of it.

This particular Bergman statement* has really a very similar flavour to all the other statements which he has made in many films. It contains a strong mystical belief in the powers of darkness, it has a certain pretentious and melancholy grandeur, it is also somewhat obscure. His choice of twenty-seven penitential sitting-minutes as opposed to maybe twenty-six or thirty, is so deliberately enigmatic that it can finally only be attributed to some private numerical symbolism in which the outsider was intended to read whatever he wished. The actual number Twenty-Seven has of course an imposing and suggestive resonance, and the same can always be said of the symbolic images of his films.

Certain words such as God, Death, Womb, Gloom, and Tomb, when they appear on any page, carry, regardless of their context and usage, a resounding and awe-inspiring impact of their own. Cathedral Words, their counterpart in photography are Cathedral Images; coffins, infants at breasts, rotting skulls, darkly-knotted and tortured branches against pale and luminous skies, darkly-jagged and moving clouds against white and sinister moons. If Bergman is a conjuror, such Cathedral Images are most certainly his cards, and he is always able to whip them out of his sleeve with speed and expertise.

Cecil B. de Mille gave the public "Religion and Sex"; Ingmar Bergman has now simply come up with a more esoteric formula, the Supernatural and Sex, decked out with Symbols. The Symbol Blatant and the Symbol Enigmatic provide the two major leavenings to all Bergman's soggy plots. In the blatant category comes the doll which cracks to the ground in *Brink of Life* the moment before a woman has a miscarriage, also the white wedding veil of purity which lies in the dust of *Smiles of a Summer Night* when the young bride elopes with her aging husband's son. Symbols enigmatic are—the handless watch produced in *Wild Strawberries* to an unexpected roll of muffled drums—the nail which pierces the Professor's hand prior to the Kafka interrogation sequence—the parents fishing in a haze of golden light at the end of his lengthy Odyssey. Much has been written by Bergman cultists as to the significance of these three particular symbols. It has been suggested that the handless watch signifies both the Timelessness of Time, and Man's Incompetence. It has been seriously argued as to whether the nail symbolises the Professor's Calvary, or merely a pang of sexual desire that pierces and wounds his flesh. The shot of the parents fishing has been thought by some to represent man's eternal search for truth in the endless rivers of time, and by others, to be a note of religious hope telling of idyllic paradises to come.

Whatever may be the correct metaphysical explanation of this parental fishing-scene finale, only one thing would seem to emerge quite clearly, that as usual Bergman has found difficulty in finding a suitable ending for his film. Once he has successfully painted a hideous Lutheran world where evil is rampant, human misery irrevocable, knowledge futile, and blind faith the only guide, he always lacks the courage to carry his conception to any necessary bitter conclusion. He is then forced to resort to

* In his introduction to **Fourscreen Plays** (*Smiles of a Summer Night*; *The Seventh Seal*; *Wild Strawberries*; *The Magician*). Secker & Warburg; 42s.

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the classical Hollywood ending. Good young lovers go galloping off on wagons over hopeful horizons at the end of *The Magician*, *Smiles of a Summer Night*, and *The Seventh Seal*. In *Brink of Life* the unmarried mother, on seeing the error of her ways is allowed to go galloping back to her own unexpectedly all-forgiving mother. The Magician is finally sent for by a corny and unconvincing king. The cold, callous Professor of *Wild Strawberries* is ultimately not only honoured by the State, but a most unlikely Swedish Beatnik says she loves him best of all.

"I CANNOT help thinking," Bergman has stated in one of his many oracular pronouncements to the world, "that the medium I have at my disposal is so fine and complicated, that it should be able to illuminate the human soul much more strongly, to reveal much more ruthlessly, and cover new realms of reality of which we are still ignorant."

It is, however, very difficult to see that Bergman himself is covering new realms of reality by constantly resorting to all the old morbid mediæval metaphors which formed the staple fare of silent German movies of the 'twenties. It is equally hard to see anything very "illuminating" in Bergman monotonously repeating that all knowledge and learning are instruments of the Devil. The only villains in any of his films are always men of science and intellect. Even if his unfortunate intellectual characters do nothing particularly evil, he still makes it clear by their presentation that just their very simple existence is the greatest Evil of all. In *Wild Strawberries* he gives us the nauseating husband of Ingrid Thulin with his twisted highbrow sneers and dried-up Death-Wish—the merciless scientific interrogator of the Kafka sequence—the obnoxious clever suitor of the teen-ager in contrast to the charming, warm, lowbrow boy who only wants to be a pastor. In *The Magician* it is, naturally, more repellent men of intellect who reject the Magician's magic, and in *The Seventh Seal* Bergman goes so far as to present his most intellectual character in the guise of Death himself. As a thriller-addict after a few specialised clues can easily spot the murderer, so a Bergman-addict need only hear that a character has made a woman pregnant and refused to visit her in the hospital, to spot this man as the egghead.

All Bergman's endless philosophical meanderings always boil down to the same simple moral. Only half-wits and virgins can ever escape disaster. In *The Seventh Seal* the adulterous actor is promptly punished by Death, and finally only the golden virgin and her idiot husband escape completely unscathed. In *Wild Strawberries*, only after the weak-minded Beatnik has made it clear that although she has been "on the road" her virginity is still intact, is she allowed to go free with the charming virginal pastor. The moronic son in *Smiles of a Summer Night* is impotent with his serving-girl (symbol of Harlotry) and potent only with purity. Bergman naturally favours his uncommon sexual pattern and grants him, what in Bergmanesque terms is the very highest human reward, an unawakened wife.

Whenever Bergman, in deference to his own art-film formula, tries to give the public Sex, he is so hampered by his own private attitudes that his love-scenes often lack the freshness of Cecil B. de Mille's. Only when he is dealing with the horrors and evils of desire does one feel the tension and excitement of a real personal preoccupation. He seems only happiest when gossiping about the sexual extravagances of his characters with all the thrilled hysteria of some village-spinster voyeuse. His camera is always creeping and peeping into clearings where the hand of a lascivious swain is up the skirt of a laughing wench. It lingers gloatingly over the swollen stomach of the unmarried mother in *Brink of Life*, and becomes seemingly transfixed between the fat heaving thighs of the woman in labour. Any scenes where he tries to depict Pure and Ideal Love are always hopelessly stylised and boring with young maidens in white dresses gathering flowers in springy meadows.

BERGMAN'S immense current popularity is really a phenomenon in itself. His rabid anti-intellectualism is presumably partially responsible. His message that the fool is wiser than anyone, has an obvious general appeal. He has also, however, a cunning, strategic grasp of currently fashionable trends. He therefore appeases supposedly more sophisticated audiences by serving them up a quasi-modern potpourri of Strindberg, Kafka, and Jung. *Smiles of a Summer Night*, by far his best and least pretentious comedy-film, was received far less seriously than his laborious, eclectic, hodgepodges such as *Wild Strawberries* and *The Seventh Seal*. It would therefore seem that it is his very pretentiousness which passes for profundity, and is, as a result, most generally respected. Sophisticated circles, by reason of their very sophistication, most easily read into all the incoherence and confusion which result from Bergman's total lack of structural mastery, some kind of glorious over-all Super Symbol of mankind's confusion in the face of the Atom Bomb.

Behind all Bergman's stuffy Protestant morality, and behind all his Swedish Modern with his easy reference to Freud, one really senses only all the horrendous mystical superstitition of an ancient Scandinavian Goth. One

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feels all the old Nordic deities (ugliest and gloomiest of the world's divinities) still lurking in the black and insular background of his haunted forests and skies. The god Nor, shaped like an eagle and compulsively nibbling on human carcases, is there flapping the wings which cause winds to moan and desolate tempests to blow through the woods of *The Seventh Seal*. Thor's punitive mallet is thrashing around in air seething and bubbling with dragon's venom outside the house of the Magician. In *Wild Strawberries* the Professor suddenly delivers some conventional religious diatribe to the young people, but Bergman makes his watery little homilies sound unconvincing and embarrassingly out of place. At the end of *The Seventh Seal*, after the Knight has unsuccessfully scoured his witch-ridden forces in search of a simple Lutheran God, the idiot figure (who can naturally see more than anyone because he is a fool) announces cheerfully that the dead are going to a better place where the salty tears will be wiped from their cheeks. One is still a little confused. Are they going to the pallid psalm-singing heavens so vaguely mentioned by the Professor? Or are they really off to wassail in the gorier Valhalla of Odin and the Magician? Bergman's characters are always waiting in abstracted and understandable uncertainty in his world where prospects of mythological catastrophe intermingle with those of Calvinist damnation. Even in Bergman's unusually up-to-date nursing home his nurses still seem to be sibyls and his doctors harbingers of doom reminding us of some terrible Swedish Ragnorok or Last Day.

At the turn of the century the Swedish novelist Söderberg wrote that he believed in only two ultimates, the desire of the flesh and the eternal loneliness of the soul. Ingmar Bergman cannot accept the desire of the flesh as an ultimate; he is, however, obssessed with the loneliness of the soul and his only memorable sequences are always on this theme. The loneliness he presents is not that of *Umberto D*, a man left without friends in a cruel and heartless society, but the self-imposed loneliness of people incapable of either feeling or communicating emotion. In *Wild Strawberries* the professor watches in hopeless isolation while his mother goes fingering through her pointless relics with her cold, oblivious hands. He struggles to establish some kind of human contact with his housekeeper but is defeated by the barriers of her etiquette and formal badinage. His daughter-in-law tries to excite her emotionally dead husband with the idea of her pregnancy and only arouses his repugnance and dislike. Bergman is always interesting when he is showing some little fragment which throws light on the relationship between two characters. A cynical dowager gossiping with her actress daughter—a tactless husband bringing flowers to a neurotic demented by the loss of her child—an old man forbidding his daughter-in-law to smoke—a wife mocking viciously while her husband tries to push a collapsed car out of a ditch. Bergman is always tedious whenever he embarks on Jungian-type musings on the mystery of the universe, and makes banal observations on the meaning of life and death. In the same way his camera-work is only really imaginative when he leaves all his laborious symbolic sequences with all their poetic, dreamy clichés, and simply photographs a sulking girl slopping her shoes along a passage.

ULTIMATELY Bergman is a master only of the vignette. He is, however, determined to be a master-thinker with a message. As a result the impact of his brilliant, skilful fragments is often lost in all the messy smörgasbord of his hysterical whimsical ideas. He boasts proudly that he has no "social conscience," and he is indeed very careful in his total avoidance of all contemporary issues. His boast, however, seems suspiciously like a calculated attempt to disguise a weakness by proclaiming it as a virtue. In *Brink of Life*, with its rigidly modern story, Bergman was for once deprived of all the fancy-dress and arty allegorical devices upon which his reputation rests. The Magician had lost his wand. His film was turgid, dull, and flat. In a desperate attempt to provoke his usual *frisson* he showed the audience a close-up of a woman being sick. This shock-tactic had by no means the same general appeal as his witch being burnt at the stake. Even his most ardent admirers found it impossible to relate it to art. *Brink of Life* was not acclaimed as a poetic masterpiece, it was simply a modern flop.

Maybe Bergman learned some kind of lesson from its failure. At any rate he would appear to have drawn out a kind of art insurance policy for his latest film, *Virgin Spring*. His characters are once again prancing around in mediæval jerkins. He has also thrown in more than his usual ration of titillations to help his audience endure his *longueurs*: he shows a rape, the near-rape of a pregnant woman, a child-murder, a flagellation, and a character fried like a sausage on an open flame.

Bergman is never frightened of overstressing his points. Sometimes his repetitiousness has had a certain hypnotic appeal. In *Virgin Spring* it is disastrous. He takes an eternity to merely establish that his Virgin is good. He makes her comb her golden hair, confide innocent secrets to her mother, sing to the dawn, ride on a snow-white

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pony to buy candles for the Mass, give all her food away to beggars, before she is finally violated and killed. By the time she dies the major part of the film is already over; there has been no action, there have been a few perfectly good shots of beautiful Swedish scenery, and the audience has grasped the point (the Virgin was good). By now, however, she is dead, and the film has nowhere to go; Bergman still refuses to finish with her. He is incapable of letting a virgin be so easily demolished; the humourless saga goes on and on. The mother wails, the father groans and flagellates himself in an absurd scene in which he appears to be merely trying to improve his circulation; friends and relatives stagger around bowed with grief, and someone murmurs darkly that once smoke goes up the chimney it becomes forever part of Eternity. Then Bergman produces his coup. The spilled blood of the virgin turns into holy water. She suddenly becomes a sacred spring. This is Bergman's message. She was indestructible after all. In her new watery form we have her with us forever.

Bergman started his career as a director of theatre for children; and now can only be called the leading director of children's films for adults. *The Magician*, a film which he has proudly described as his "most personal" statement is another pitiable piece of infantile hocus-pocus, with a general dramatic level far lower than Punch and Judy. Doors are blown open by mysterious invisible forces, bodies are sawn in half in coffins, and a live witch goes gibbering round the screen, her presence inexcusably unexplained.

Bergman usually gets magnificent performances from all his actors; one can therefore only conclude that his need to make "most personal" philosophical statements has undermined a genuine directorial talent. Maybe by now, only the Lord God can deliver him—as well as us—from his philosophical ghoulies and ghosties and things that go Bump in the dark.

The Wicked Words

The wicked words corrupt. The young are gorged
On printed sex and violence till they tear
The pages up, still grunting with the urge
To rip a softer substance. Everywhere
The literate werewolves roam in drooling quest
Of nice white meat. Dread walks on pointed toes.
The wicked words corrupt, should be suppressed.
The young men tick like bombs in coffee bars,
Swallow the scalding music, pupils glow
Like fuses, dangerous. Yes, I suppose
They are quite capable of violent acts,
Translating into deed the feverish prose.
The odd thing is I've never seen them read,
Not wicked words nor any words at all,
As I've seen wrinkled gents and wispy dames
Munching up the print with serious greed,
The print recording deeds of lust and terror,
Incest, murder, rape and God knows what,
Intrepid readers who would squeak with horror
To see a mouse or dog or pussy bleed
And vomit at the sight of human snot.

Vernon Scannell

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NOTES & TOPICS

Richard Wright

I WAS FAR from imagining, when I agreed to write this memoir, that it would prove to be such a painful and difficult task. What, after all, can I really say about Richard? Everything founders in the sea of what might have been. We might have been friends, for example, but I cannot honestly say that we were. There might have been some way of avoiding our quarrel, our rupture; I can only say that I failed to find it. The quarrel having occurred, perhaps there might have been a way to have become reconciled. And, in fact, I think that I mysteriously and stubbornly counted on this, the way a child dreams of winning, by means of some dazzling exploit, the love of his parents.

However, he is dead now. The debt I owe him can now never be discharged, at least not in the way I hoped. The saddest thing about our relationship is that my only means of discharging my debt to Richard was to become a writer; and this effort revealed, more and more clearly as the years went on, the deep and irreconcilable differences between our points of view.

This might not have been so serious if I had been older when we met—if I had been, that is, less uncertain of myself, and less monstrously egotistical. But I was twenty, a carnivorous age; he was then as old as I am now, thirty-six; he had been my idol since school, and I, as the fledgling Negro writer, was, very shortly, in the position of his protégé. This was not really fair to either of us, since, as writers, we were about as unlike as any two could possibly be. But no one can read the future and neither of us knew this then. We were linked together, really, because both of us were black. I had made my pilgrimage to meet him because he was the greatest black writer in the world for me. In *Uncle Tom's Children*, in *Native Son*, and, above all, in *Black Boy*, I found expressed, for the first time in my life, the sorrow, the rage, and the murderous bitterness which was eating me up and eating up the lives of those around me. Richard's work was an immense liberation and revelation. He became my ally and my witness, and, alas! my father.

Richard Wright, the well-known American Negro writer, died in Paris recently aged 50. His countryman, James Baldwin, is the author of "GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN," "NOTES OF A NATIVE SON," *and other novels.*

I REMEMBER our first meeting very well. It was in Brooklyn, it was winter, I was broke, naturally, and shabby and hungry and scared. He appeared from the depths of what I remember as an extremely long apartment. Now his face, voice, manner, figure, are all very sadly familiar to me. But they were a great shock to me then. It is always a shock to meet famous men. There is always an irreducible injustice in the encounter for the famous man cannot possibly fit the image which one has evolved of him. My own image of Richard was almost certainly based on Canada Lee's terrifying stage portrait of Bigger Thomas. Richard was not like that at all. His voice was light and even rather sweet, with a Southern melody in it; his body was more round than square, more square than tall; and his grin was more boyish than I had expected, and more diffident. He had a trick, when he greeted me, of saying, "Hey, boy!" with a kind of pleased, surprised expression on his face. It was very friendly, and it was also, faintly, mocking conspiratorial—as though we were two black boys, in league against the world, and had just managed to spirit away several loads of water-melon.

We sat in the living-room and Richard brought out a bottle of bourbon and ice and glasses. Ellen Wright was somewhere in the back with the baby, and made only one, brief appearance near the end of the evening. I did not drink in those days, did not know how to drink, and I was terrified that the liquor, on my empty stomach, would have the most disastrous consequences. Richard talked to me, or, rather, drew me out on the subject of the novel I was working on then. I was so afraid of falling off my chair and so anxious for him to be interested in me, that I told him far more about the novel than I, in fact, knew about it, madly improvising, one jump ahead of the bourbon, on all the themes which cluttered up my mind. I am sure that Richard realised this, for he seemed to be amused by me. But I think he liked me. I know that I liked him, then, and later, and all the time. (But I also know that, later on, he did not believe this.)

He agreed, that night, to read the sixty or seventy pages I had done on my novel as soon as I could send them to him. I didn't dawdle about getting the pages in the mail; Richard commented very kindly and favourably, and his support helped me to win a fellowship. He was very proud of me then, and I was puffed up with pleasure, and determined to make him prouder still.

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But this was not to be, for, as so often happens, my first real triumph turned out to be the herald of my first real defeat. I rather regret that Richard and I had not become friends by this time, for it might have made a great deal of difference. We might at least have caught a glimpse of the difference between my mind and his; and if we could have argued about it then, our quarrel might not have been so painful later. But we had not become friends, mainly, indeed, I suppose, because of this very difference, and also because I really was too young and adored him too much and was too afraid of him. And this meant that when my first wintry exposure to the publishing world had resulted in the irreparable ruin of my first novel, I scarcely knew how to face anyone. I was too ashamed of myself and I was sure that he was ashamed of me, too. This was utter foolishness on my part, for Richard knew far more about first novels and fledgling novelists than that; but I had been out for his approval. It simply had not occurred to me in those days that anyone *could* approve of me if I had tried for something and failed. The young think that failure is the Siberian end of the line, banishment from all the living, and tend to do what I then did—which was to hide.

I SAW HIM a few days before he went to Paris, in 1946. It was a strange meeting, melancholy in the way a theatre is melancholy when the run of the play is ended and the cast and crew are about to be dispersed. All the relationships so laboriously created now no longer exist, seem never to have existed; and the future looks grey and problematical indeed. Richard's apartment —by this time, he lived in the Village, on Charles Street—seemed rather like that, dismantled, everything teetering on the edge of oblivion; people rushing in and out, friends, as I supposed, but, alas, most of them were merely admirers; and Richard and I seemed really to be at the end of *our* rope, for he had done what he could for me, and it had not worked out, and now he was going away. It seemed to me that he was sailing into the most splendid of futures, for he was going to Paris. But Richard did not seem, though he was jaunty, to be overjoyed. There was a striking sobriety in his face that day. He talked a great deal about a friend of his, who was in trouble with the U.S. Immigration authorities, and was about to be, or already had been, deported. Richard was not being deported, of course; he was travelling to a foreign country as an honoured guest; and he was vain and young and vivid enough to find this very pleasing and exciting. Yet—he knew a great deal about exile: all artists do, especially American artists, especially American Negro artists. He had endured already, liberals and literary critics to the contrary, a long exile in his own country. He must have wondered what the real thing would be like, and he must have wondered, too, what would be the unimaginable effect on his daughter, who could now be raised in a country which would not penalise her on account of her colour.

And that day was very nearly the last time Richard and I spoke to each other without the later, terrible warfare.

TWO YEARS LATER, I, TOO, quit America, never intending to return. The day I got to Paris, before I even checked in at a hotel, I was carried to the Deux Magots, where Richard sat, with the editors of a magazine called *Zero*. "Hey, boy!" he cried, looking more surprised and pleased and conspiratorial than ever, and younger and happier.

I later became rather closely associated with *Zero* magazine, and wrote for them an essay called "Everybody's Protest Novel." On the day the magazine was published, and before I had seen it, I walked into the Brasserie Lipp. Richard was there, and he called me over. I will never forget that interview, but I doubt that I will ever be able to re-create it.

Richard accused me of having betrayed him —and not only him but all American Negroes— by attacking the idea of protest literature. It simply had not occurred to me that the essay could be interpreted in that way. I was still in that stage when I imagined that whatever was clear to me had only to be pointed out to become immediately clear to everyone. It had not occurred to me that the somewhat unconventional point of view which I had come to, after all, with some effort and some pain, could be looked on as treacherous or subversive. I had mentioned Richard's *Native Son* because it was the most important and most celebrated novel of Negro life to have appeared in America. Richard thought that I had attacked it; as far as I was concerned, I had scarcely even criticised it. Richard thought that I was trying to destroy his novel and his reputation; it had not entered my mind that either of these *could* be destroyed, and certainly not by me. And yet, what made the interview so ghastly was not merely the foregoing or the fact that I could find no words with which to defend myself. What made it most painful was that Richard was right to be hurt, I was wrong to have hurt him. He saw clearly enough, far more clearly than I had dared to allow myself to see, what I had done: I had used his work as a kind of springboard into my own. His work was a road-block in my

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road, the sphinx, really, whose riddles I had to answer before I could become myself. I thought confusedly then, and feel very definitely now, that this was the greatest tribute I could have paid him. But it is not an easy tribute to bear and I do not know how I will take it when my time comes. For, finally, Richard was hurt because I had not given him credit for any human feelings or failings, and indeed I had not, for he had never really been a human being for me, he had been an idol, and idols are created in order to be destroyed.

THIS QUARREL was never really patched up, though it must be said that, over a period of years, we tried.

"What do you mean, *protest!*" Richard cried. "*All* literature is protest. You can't name a single novel that isn't protest." To this I could only weakly counter that all literature might be protest but all protest was not literature. "Oh," he would say then, looking, as he so often did, bewilderingly juvenile, "here you come again with all that art for art's sake crap." This never failed to make me furious, and my anger, for some reason, always seemed to amuse him. Our rare, best times came when we managed to exasperate each other to the point of helpless hilarity. "Roots," Richard would snort, when I had finally worked my way around to this dreary subject, "what ——— roots! Next thing you'll be telling me is that all coloured folks have rhythm." Once, one evening, we managed to throw the whole terrifying subject to the winds, and Richard, Chester Hines, and myself, went out and got drunk. It was a good night, perhaps the best I remember in all the time I knew Richard. For he and Chester were friends, they brought out the best in each other, and the atmosphere they created brought out the best in me. Three absolutely tense, unrelentingly egotistical, and driven people, free in Paris but far from home....

Part of the trouble between Richard and myself was that I was nearly twenty years younger and had never seen the South. Perhaps I can now imagine Richard's odyssey better than I could then, but it is only imagination. I have not, in my own flesh, travelled, and paid the price of such a journey, from the deep South to Chicago to New York to Paris; and the world which produced Richard Wright has vanished and will never be seen again. Now, it seems almost in the twinkling of an eye, nearly twenty years have passed since Richard and I sat nervously over bourbon in his Brooklyn living-room. These years have seen nearly all of the props of the Western reality knocked out from under it, all of the world's capitals have changed, the deep South has changed, and Africa has changed.

For a long time, it seems to me, Richard was cruelly caught in this high wind. His ears, I think, were nearly deafened by the roar, all about him, not only of falling idols but of falling enemies. Strange people indeed crossed oceans, from Africa and America, to come to his door; and he really did not know who these people were, and they very quickly sensed this. Not until the very end of his life, judging by some of the stories in his last book, *Eight Men*, did his imagination really begin to assess the century's new and terrible dark stranger. Well, he worked up until the end, died, as I hope to do, in the middle of a sentence, and his work is now an irreducible part of the history of our swift and terrible time. Whoever He may be, and wherever you may be, may God be with you, Richard, and may He help me not to fail that argument which you began in me.

James Baldwin

Schapiro on Berenson

THE TROUBLE about Schapiro's brilliant attack on Berenson in the January number of ENCOUNTER is that, along with straight accusations, there are signs of shilly-shallying, and criticism by insinuation. My impression—I am prepared to be convinced that this is mistaken—is that he hesitates to deliver a frontal assault all along the line, not because he doubts for a moment that such an assault is deserved, but because he cannot trust himself to be absolutely objective, were he to attempt it. One knows people who will attack others openly, but who have some disreputable motive for doing so lurking behind their high-mindedness; one knows others who are interested only in the truth, but scrupulously hesitate to come clean. Schapiro belongs to the latter category. His very deviousness is a reflection of his integrity. He passionately disapproves of everything Berenson stands for, yet I can only suppose that he is suspicious of his animosity, fearing that it may be partly irrational, and so stops short of expressing himself as freely as he would like.

The result is that at one moment he will fall over backwards in his efforts to be fair, as when he praises enthusiastically Berenson's early essays which reflect an æsthetic attitude the very opposite of his own,[1] or when he argues

[1] A partial explanation of his enthusiasm is his deep interest in the history of ideas in the late

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that the building up of a fortune—an activity in which he himself would never have dreamt of indulging, and which he must regard with distaste, if not scorn—enabled Berenson to provide himself with the tools of his trade; at the next he will allow himself a sharp little jab, as when he accuses Berenson of not always keeping scholarship and art dealing apart, or when he writes off Berenson's flattering reference to Cézanne in an early essay as "a bit of up-to-date dressing."[2] At other times he will rely on loaded words, on quotations from Berenson's own writings and recorded sayings (some which are admittedly devastating), accompanied by the adverse comment that is expected, as though he were taking refuge in the efficacy of a semi-private language which people of his own persuasion, but not others, will correctly interpret. For these reasons, and not because the criticisms themselves are objectionable to admirers of Berenson like myself, his essay is not as detached or well-balanced as, say, his piece on an earlier art critic, Fromentin (*Partisan Review*, January 1949), where personal feelings do not have to be concealed or do not count to the same extent.

WHENEVER HE FEELS on safe enough ground to come out into the open, whenever, that is, he can persuade himself that he is dealing with facts, he is at his least fair; he will concede nothing to the other side, though a concession is called for and would not destroy his case. One instance which I mentioned above is his analysis of the influence on Berenson's scholarship of his association with the art trade. He takes Berenson to task for informing Duveen that their panel of the *Crucifixion* by Piero "surpasses the frescoes at Arezzo in quality and condition." "This is a picture," adds Schapiro, "which later critics . . . have judged to be by an assistant of Piero." It would have been fairer to add that Berenson always held to his opinion that it was autograph, long after he had severed his connection with Duveen and the picture had entered the comparative safety of a private collection. (It would be too uncharitable to argue that Berenson stuck to his guns simply because he had once, in a certifying letter, committed himself to a favourable judgment.)

Schapiro cites only one example in support of his damaging claim that Berenson's "published writings contain more than one sign of his dependence on Duveen": an article on a picture which he considered sufficiently important to publish, though it was on the market. I still do not understand why Schapiro should blame Berenson for having done this,[3] since outstanding pictures deserve to be published, wherever they happen to be. But he does make one sharp point: that Berenson kept silent on the bad condition of this picture—implying, I suppose, that had it been in the Uffizi he would not have hesitated to speak of the damage. Again it would have been fairer to add that Berenson seldom paid any attention to the condition of pictures. His failure to comment in this case on the overpainting may simply be due to the fact that he was not interested in later embellishments. He used the entirely repainted *Shepherd* by Giorgione as his only illustration to the first edition of his *Venetian Painters*, but since it is safely at Hampton Court, Schapiro had no reason to refer to it.

SCHAPIRO IS OUTSPOKEN in his condemnation of Berenson's attitude to modern art, and this is because here again he feels the firm ground of inescapable fact beneath him. His complaints have a familiar ring about them: for some of Berenson's closest associates have reproached him for his hostility towards the most imaginative and enduring creations of our time, or have done their utmost, within the limits of honesty, to excuse him. Schapiro has a clear case, but he spoils it by exaggeration. He admits that in 1908 Berenson "praised Matisse as a draftsman (*sic*)," but he introduces this phrase in such an off-hand manner that anyone would suppose that Berenson had never done more than give Matisse's head an encouraging pat in passing; whereas, as Schapiro knows very well, Berenson expressed the opinion on that occasion that Matisse "has, after twenty years of very earnest searching, at last found the great highroad travelled by all the best masters of the visual

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19th century, irrespective of whether those ideas were sympathetic to him or not, but I feel there must be more to it than just this. It is a pity, incidentally, that he did not find the space to enquire more closely into Berenson's sources in German art-historical writing of the late 19th century. We still do not know how much Berenson cribbed, and how much is truly original.

[2] He manages to have it both ways: he imputes a disreputable motive for Berenson's *dislike*, as well as liking, of modern art, implying that approval of its more extreme manifestations would not have found favour in the polite society which Berenson cultivated.

[3] Schapiro seems to be implying, in his quotations from the article in footnote 2 on p. 58, that Berenson should not have referred to "the merchants of Paris, London, and New York" as "great," but he uses the same adjective to describe them in his Foreword to the 1932 and 1936 *Lists* where there was no inducement to butter up dealers.

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arts for the last sixty centuries at least"—praise so extravagant that one begins to wonder whether Schapiro's ingenious theory that Berenson at that period "thought of modern art in mid-19th-century terms" quite holds water. And if we are to believe what Berenson wrote in Tripoli in 1955—even if it is only partly true—that in the first decade of this century he regarded Picasso's drawings as "being by a born draughtsman of the highest classical kind already not inferior to Raphael or to Ingres,"[4] there must be something more to be said in his favour.

Schapiro is at pains to demonstrate, not only that Berenson's understanding of Cézanne was limited in 1897, but that he does not deserve the credit for the "discovery of Cézanne and Matisse long before they were recognised by others" ascribed to him, so he says, by Berenson himself and his admirers. To compare Cézanne to Michelangelo, and to speak of his "exquisite modelling" as Berenson does in his *Central Italian Painters* may not take us very far, but one would be hard put to it to find any other appreciative response to the painter in English or American art literature before the 20th century. (Roger Fry, for instance, never paid the slightest attention to Cézanne until nearly ten years later.) No responsible person would think of claiming any more for Berenson's prophetic insight than this. And yet Schapiro maintains that far greater claims have been made for him, both by himself and others. One would like to know on what occasions, and where Berenson has contradicted his statement in *Essays in Appreciation* that he was not the first to mention Matisse in America or in England (Berenson does not even bother to add "in France," so obvious did it seem to him that Matisse was already establishing a reputation there before he came on the scene.)

IT IS, OF COURSE, more difficult to join issue with Schapiro on matters of opinion, especially when out of scrupulousness he hesitates to be explicit. In any case, I often find myself in agreement with him: thus, his argument that Berenson's ideas almost entirely failed to develop after about 1900 seems to me unanswerable (and reminds me of those sneering references Berenson used to make, not only to recent theories about Renaissance art and to modern art and literature, but to psychology, education, and developments in Social Services in Great Britain, much to the embarrassment of his socially-conscious English friends, as they strolled with him in his semi-feudal Tuscan countryside). However, readers of Rimbaud will realise that failure to grow when youth is past does not necessarily diminish the value of a writer's contribution: the most perceptive critic of modern art of Berenson's generation, Fénéon, suffered from the same handicap. Schapiro's remarks about connoisseurship, where he switches his attack from a condemnation of the practice, to questioning Berenson's interpretation of his involvement in this activity, seem to me masterly, as well as his analysis of Berenson's attitude towards his own Jewish past. It more or less goes without saying that no one is better equipped than Schapiro to throw light into these dark recesses.

ON THE SUBJECT of Berenson's social position I feel there is much we would disagree about, but it is hard to put one's finger on the points at issue. I suspect he thinks this worldliness was corrupting,[5] though he never says so in so many words. I believe it was little more than an amiable, fairly harmless vice in which Berenson freely indulged. He enjoyed the company of smart ladies and gentlemen, but chiefly because he needed an appreciative and at the same time uncritical audience in moments of relaxation; whenever the smarties had the temerity to answer back they were soon put in their place. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that the company of the truly distinguished—the kind of people Schapiro would himself respect—in every walk of life (except his own) continued to the end to provide him with deeper satisfaction. Schapiro maliciously lists a few people Berenson entertained at Settignano; they are kings and millionaires; therefore he does not feel the need to add his own adverse comment. We are not supposed to remember that one of them, the King of Sweden, is a serious archæologist.

Schapiro leaves out altogether many attractive sides of Berenson's personality, more significant than the fact that he sought the company of the rich and elegant. Others have written of the brilliance of his conversation, the breadth of his culture. I would like to add his generosity (amazing in one so rich), and his capacity for inspiring deep affection, which no one who was not his friend can understand. Those who knew him well, treasure the memory of his human qualities, and of the Goethe-like serenity of

[4] *Essays in Appreciation*, London, 1958, p. 129.

[5] He writes in one place (p. 58) that "the worldly aims soon contaminated his intellectual goals," but it is evident from the context that he is referring to Berenson's accumulation of wealth as a dealer, not to his social position, though of course the two are linked.

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his later years—memories which nothing, no denunciation however shrewd, can poison or eradicate.

Benedict Nicolson

BERNARD BERENSON, unlike many students of art, made a great deal of money, and those who write about him are no doubt right to consider this, among other facts of his life. Mrs. Sylvia Sprigge, in her biography, shows in this the irrelevant curiosity of a gossip-writer. Mr. Meyer Schapiro, in his essay [ENCOUNTER, January], makes it, more portentously, the basis of a final moral and æsthetic evaluation. This, it seems to me, shows an undue preoccupation with money which may shed more light on the authors than on their subject.

I only knew Berenson in the last fifteen years of his life, but during those years I knew him very well, and I discussed every kind of topic with him and was aware of no reticence on his part. His connection with the art-market was no secret. He never concealed his Jewish origins, and would speak freely of Mrs. Gardner and Duveen. In my recollection of him I simply do not recognise the extraordinary caricature which Mr. Schapiro has constructed out of what seems to me an artful mixture of true facts and malevolent, unjustified innuendoes.

Of course Mr. Schapiro may say that these were Berenson's last years, when success had absorbed the strains of an earlier, more active, more competitive life, and dispensed him from the former necessities of compromise and concealment. To such a statement, if made particularly about Berenson, I could not, from my own direct experience of him, make any particular rejoinder; but if the statement is generalised, I would make a general rejoinder which I have no doubt is applicable in this case.

Mr. Schapiro seems to make two fundamental assumptions. He seems to assume, that whoever, at any time, has doubts about his position in society, is thereby a "traitor" to his real identity (Berenson was a Jew, and was not always reconciled to his Jewishness); and, secondly, he seems to assume that whoever touches money is, *eo ipso*, defiled: that the making of money does not merely qualify or complicate or reduce but totally corrupts and cancels out all the positive qualities of an intellectual, so that, in the final judgment, nothing worthwhile can remain. Both of these assumptions seem to me naïve and wrong.

No doubt there are people of perfect integrity, simple, elementary personalities, who from the beginning are what they are and know what they are; and no doubt these people are to be admired. But there are also other people who are, or feel themselves to be, misfits in society, and who adjust themselves more or less painfully to it. If some of the saints have belonged to the former category, most men of genius have belonged to the latter. It is thanks to their uncertainties and discomforts in it that they have become more acutely aware of the world around them, seen its iridescences and half-lights, looked behind the blunt, obvious data which other men, because they were born among them, have taken for granted. In such men the heightened awareness thus created tends gradually to absorb the discomfort out of which it may have been born, and it seems to me childish to make the discomfort, instead of the awareness, the basis of a final judgment of "values."

Much the same point can be made about money-making. One cannot serve God and Mammon, says Mr. Schapiro sententiously; but the operative word is "serve." No doubt some pure, devoted spirits have worshipped at a private shrine and never made a penny. But there are others who, though they may have made fortunes, may also have contributed far more to the world, in an immaterial sense, than these pure spirits. Francis Bacon, Rubens, Voltaire, Keynes were men of genius who made a great deal of money out of their talents; are we, because of this, to declare their genius a mere "commodity," and to dismiss them and their "values" as false and corrupt, in favour of some dull dog who may have created nothing but who at least never earned anything?

AS A GENERAL RULE I believe that if a man is worth remembering after he is dead, it is because he has been, in one of B. B.'s own favourite phrases, "life-enhancing": because he has added something to the immaterial wealth of the world. If he has done that, the discomforts and compromises of his life are worth remembering too: but as contributing to his work, illustrating it, perhaps even modifying it, but not cancelling it. If they cancel it, he is not worth remembering at all, and there is no point in attacking him.

Mr. Schapiro says that B. B. was ultimately discontented with his work: he would like to have been not merely a "connoisseur" but a "universal critic and philosopher of the arts." I agree with this, only adding that such discontent is felt by nearly all sentient men who have achieved anything. He also says that in fact B. B. was better as a connoisseur than he would have been as a philosopher. This also may be true. But does it not occur to Mr.

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Schapiro that B. B. may have owed his brilliance as a "mere connoisseur" to his interest, however amateur, in more universal subjects? It is a general philosophy, a non-specialist interest, which, in history, has made possible every intellectual advance, even in specialised subjects. Pure specialisation may fill in the corners of knowledge; it may also produce less "pure" results—the *odium theologicum* of resentful critics.

Hugh Trevor-Roper

Arms Races and War

WHEN I recently ventured, in the correspondence columns of a national newspaper, to question the popular thesis that "armaments-races always end in war," I received not only a pained reproof from a distinguished Nobel prize-winner but a number of abusive personal letters from members of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Had I questioned the equally popular adage "if you desire peace, prepare for war," the result, *mutatis mutandis*, would probably have been exactly the same.

This was depressing, but not particularly surprising. When people think about the issues of war and peace at all, they usually start from one of two unexamined presuppositions: either that in international relations the ultimate reality is always force; or that it is only the stupidity of governing élites and the gullibility of the masses which make force an element in them at all. There is no lack of expert examination of both of these ideas, and indeed of the whole role of force in international relations; but such academic analysis seldom percolates to the general public, or even to governing élites, except as ammunition for causes already espoused. It is not likely that many of the publicists and politicians who express opinions on these questions have even heard of, for example, Professor Samuel P. Huntington's study on *Arms Races: Prerequisites and Results*,* or of Dr. Lewis F. Richardson's papers recently published under the title *Arms and Insecurity*.†

This is a pity. Academics are notoriously irresponsible and ignorant of the realities of political life, but they usually try to get their facts right. One may accept or reject their conclusions: Lowes Dickinson's famous study of *The International Anarchy* may be selective and biased, but nobody who has read it can ever again subscribe wholeheartedly to the thesis *si vis pacem, para bellum*. It is equally difficult, after reading Huntingdon and Richardson, to maintain dogmatically either that arms-races always lead to war or that war is always preceded by arms-races. Richardson pointed out that three wars between great powers during the past hundred years—the Franco-German War of 1870, the Russo-Turkish War of 1877, and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904—were preceded not by arms-races but by *détentes*. Huntingdon identifies twelve distinct arms-races between 1840 and 1941, of which only five ended in war in the sense that they were still in progress when hostilities began. The evidence does not permit us to say more than that some wars have been preceded by arms-races; and that does not get us very far.

NOR DOES THE EVIDENCE indicate any clear and necessary connection between the arms-race and the war which followed it. Among the factors weighed by statesmen in deciding to go to war, the relative strength of their own and of the enemy's armed forces looms, obviously, very large indeed. Military experts are particularly prone to counsel war if they believe their own forces to enjoy a temporary superiority which is likely, within a few years, to be lost. Such motives guided von Moltke in 1870, influenced his nephew and Conrad von Hötzendorff in 1914, and were decisive in shaping Hitler's decision to force the issue in 1938–9. But such a situation can arise at any point in an arms-race; indeed it can arise before an arms-race has begun at all. For the view that "the longer an arms-race continues the more likely it is to end in war" it is difficult to find any historical evidence whatever. England and France were engaged in an uninterrupted naval race from 1840 until 1866, and again from 1874 until 1904: fifty-six years unbroken by mutual hostilities. On the other hand the arms-race between Germany and the Franco-British alliance which preceded the Second World War lasted only for five years, from 1934–39. And few people would maintain that the danger of war breaking out between the West and the Communist blocs is greater to-day, after ten years of the nuclear arms-race, than it was in 1950, when the Korean War was raging, NATO was forming as a panic measure, and the nuclear race had hardly begun.

The events of 1908–1914 certainly seem to stand as an awful warning. Between these years the total military expenditure of the two European power-blocs, according to Dr. Richardson's

* Published in *Public Policy: A Yearbook of the Graduate School of Public Administration*, Harvard University, 1958.

† Stevens, 3 guineas.

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figures, rose from £235·7 million to £390·1 million, doing much to exacerbate the international mistrust which was their basic cause.

The parallel with our own day seems obvious. Now, as then, military leaders, obsessed with the apparent necessities of national security, remain blind to the aggressive appearance which their purely defensive measures have for their equally obsessed opposite numbers on the other side of the hill. But the more striking a parallel appears, the more misleading it may be. The pre-1914 arms-race consisted of competitive attempts to raise the largest possible armies. There could be no end to it, save that set by the man-power and perhaps the industrial resources of the contestants. To-day the search is not for the greatest number but for the most invulnerable of retaliatory weapons; and it is not inconceivable that it may be a caucus-race in which everybody can win. Security may lie, as has been pointed out by another academic, Professor Schelling of Harvard, not in disarmament but in selective and mutually tolerated armament.

One thing at least is certain. The development of nuclear weapons and of missile technology have so transformed the problem of national defence that one must be very cautious indeed about citing parallels from the pre-nuclear age as arguments either in favour of greater national "preparedness" or for greater international trust.

Michael Howard

London Commentary

On Economic Growth

By C. A. R. Crosland

EVEN Conservative Ministers now admit that the British rate of growth is distressingly slow. During the 1950s our gross national product rose by 2 per cent per annum. This compares with 4 per cent in France, 5 per cent in Italy, 7 per cent in Germany and Japan, and still higher figures in the Soviet bloc. For some time after the war it was said, in mitigation, that these countries had the advantage of "starting from scratch;" they were simply making good exceptional war-time losses and regaining the relative position which they held in 1938. But by 1955 post-war recovery was complete; and since then they have been steadily gaining on Britain even relative to 1938.

Does this matter? Britain is already a comparatively wealthy country, with a standard of living twenty times as high as that of (say) India; and even with the existing rate of growth this standard will double in three decades, easily surpassing the present American level of real income. Of course our wealth is badly used and badly distributed; but this can be corrected by government action. Is there any point in striving for still higher growth?

The answer is yes, for several reasons. First, the British people want to become better-off, and want to do so rather quickly; and this is not, as paternalistic intellectuals often think, simply from motives of social emulation. In a democracy, the government must respond to this desire. Secondly, despite the relatively high average level of consumption, we still have some exceptionally urgent claims on our resources. We have tended, in the excitement of the recent consumption-boom, to skimp certain other types of expenditure. Thus we badly need to spend more on the social services (where, contrary to popular opinion, we have now fallen behind most European countries, notably in the treatment of old people), slum clearance and urban re-development, the transport system, social investment in hospitals and higher education, and aid to the under-developed areas. All of these claims could be met over a long period of years even from the present growth-rate. But we surely want to do better than that; and only more rapid growth will give us the elbow-

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room to accommodate them with reasonable expedition.

It is not only a question of finding the extra resources. There is also, thirdly, the "transfer" problem. Since they fall mainly on public funds, these expenditures will require higher government revenue. But the British public is at present in a very tight-fisted mood; encouraged by vulgar Tory politicians, it grudges the Exchequer every penny of taxation—though complaining bitterly at the same time about inadequate public services. This difficulty can be met only by rapid growth; for this, by automatically raising the yield of *existing* taxes, enables the higher spending to be floated off without an increase in *rates* of tax.

Fourthly, rapid growth must tend, on balance, to diminish social tension. True, it may give rise to tensions of its own, notably amongst those groups (such as railwaymen or teachers) which, having held a relatively high position in the past, get left behind in a period of rapid advance. But this is generally outweighed by the contentment induced by a long period of rapidly-rising prosperity. Revolutionary impulses fade; group conflict is reduced; and the angry despair of the past gives way to optimism about the future. The recent tragic events in Belgium would surely not have occurred if the Belgian economy had grown as fast over the last decade as the German.

QUESTIONS of redistribution, for example, arouse less popular passion. Given rapid growth, it is not necessary that some people should be made poorer in order that others may become richer; a large annual increase in wealth is available for distribution. Thus the rich are less violently hostile to higher social spending; while the workers see that their real incomes depend far more on continued growth than on further redistribution. This in no way implies that the existing distribution is satisfactory, only that it can be considered deliberately in terms of what is "just" rather than as a desperate issue of immediate economic welfare.

Fifthly, growth is the best guarantee against inflation. In a fully-employed economy, organised workers are strongly placed to enforce their claims for higher incomes. This is true not only of the Trade Unions, but also (as we have seen in recent years) of professional and white-collar groups such as doctors, civil servants, and policemen. No doubt more restraint could be shown in bargaining over incomes; and it would be most desirable to extend the interval between wage settlements by introducing longer-term contracts on the American model. But given full employment, money incomes are always likely to rise by 4 to 5 per cent a year. Price stability is then possible only if productivity rises at an equal rate; if it does not, inflation is inevitable.

The contrast between Britain and Germany is illuminating here. Contrary to popular belief, German wages have risen as fast as British wages; taking 1953 as 100, hourly wages in manufacturing in 1959 were 148 in Germany and 143 in Britain. But whereas productivity in Germany was rising by over 5 per cent per annum, in Britain it rose annually by under 2 per cent. Hence, prices rose much faster in Britain. Thus the only way of accommodating the inevitable increase in money-incomes without inflation is by a rapid growth of output.

THIS IS ALSO the only solution to the balance of payments problem. If productivity-growth in Britain is markedly slower than in other countries, British goods will become gradually less competitive; their share in world exports will fall, while competing imports rise. This is what has occurred in the past decade; hence the recurrent payments crises. But instead of breaking out of the impasse by accelerated growth, we have fallen into a vicious circle. Slow growth weakens the foreign balance; the Government reacts by cutting back demand; this has the effect of again slowing down investment and the rate of growth; so the foreign balance deteriorates still further in the years ahead. Such a policy could work only if the pound were periodically devalued; if the rate of growth is out of alignment with that of other countries, then the rate of exchange must be re-aligned if our goods are to remain competitive. But the right answer is, of course, more rapid growth. It is significant that those countries which have grown fastest in recent years (notably the Six and Japan) have enjoyed a consistently strong payments position, while those which have grown more slowly (notably Britain, the United States, and Canada) have all experienced continual balance of payments worries.

None of these are arguments, however, for straining every nerve to achieve maximum growth at all costs. Such a policy, while inevitable in an under-developed country, would make no sense in Britain. It would involve a sacrifice of other social goals, such as freedom or equality or leisure or simply peace of mind; and it would be justified by considerations neither of domestic welfare nor (as I explained when answering Mr. Crossman in last October's ENCOUNTER) of Cold War competition. Indeed, since we have a nearly stationary population, we do not even need to emulate the rate of total growth of those Western European countries whose population is increasing more rapidly.

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We should satisfy all the above requirements with an annual growth-rate of between 3 and 4 per cent.

Economists have not yet produced a theory of growth comparable, in its degree of common acceptance, to the Keynesian theory of employment. Indeed growth is a new subject. Until recently, governments and economists were preoccupied with fending off slumps and unemployment and the idea of steady growth scarcely entered into their calculations. It is only in the last decade that this has become an avowed object of policy, and that comparisons of growth have come to be bandied about on all sides.

Nevertheless, some things can be said with reasonable certainty. Most of them are said in the recent P.E.P. Report*—a useful collation of the essential facts and arguments, notably sound in its judgments though not stylistically scintillating. We need higher investment, more rapid scrapping of obsolete plant, fiercer competition, better technical education, a greater mobility of labour, and more purposive Government planning.

THE REQUIRED *economic* policies are relatively easy to discern. The question arises, however, as to whether there may not be deeper *social* causes inhibiting growth in Britain. Students of growth tend to lay an increasing emphasis on sociological as opposed to economic factors. For example, higher investment used to be regarded as a panacea, and a precise relationship assumed between the ratio of investment to G.N.P. and the rate of growth. But we have recently had rather a high rate of new investment per worker in Britain, without, however, a corresponding productivity-increase; Norway, again, has had by far the highest investment-ratio in Europe, yet only a moderate rate of growth of output. This suggests that the productivity of any given level of investment depends partly on the *technical dynamism* of the economy, its readiness to absorb and assimilate technical change; and this may depend as much on social as on economic factors.

IT SEEMS PROBABLE that social attitudes do inhibit growth in Britain. But *what* social attitudes? We have in the first instance to explain an attitude on the part of management. Empirical studies show that a high proportion of British managements, in contrast to a minority of their compatriots and a majority of their competitors abroad, are slow to introduce new products, display unaggressive salesmanship, maintain inadequate after-sales service, belittle market research, fail to seek new markets, decline to attend trade fairs abroad, send catalogues to South America written in English, are afraid of foreign competition, and generally show a spirit neither of thoroughness nor innovation.

There are several popular explanations for this. It is said, for example, that the British rank material wealth lower than other nations, and so strive less hard to maximise their incomes. But I can see no sign whatever that the British (in all classes) are less disagreeably obsessed with money than other peoples. Again, it is said that business success carries a lower social prestige in Britain than elsewhere. But although this was true in the past, it can hardly be so to-day when Etonians and Wykehamists are positively falling over each other to get into industry. In any event, the same lack of thoroughness and innovation are apparent in other walks of life, including many—social, cultural, and sporting—where weak money-incentives can hardly be the main explanation.

I am more inclined to find the explanation (and this would cover the other walks of life) in a typically British lack of pride in *maximum professional achievement*, especially technical achievement. It is professionalism, I believe, rather than material rewards or business success, which is rated lower in Britain than elsewhere.

For this there are many reasons. An aristocratic tradition, persisting strongly in the public schools, has bred a cult of the amateur, the gifted dilettante, the rounded and cultured Wykehamist who, patently superior to the drab, despised professional or technician, can turn his hand with marvellous facility to anything. It has led also to a strong emphasis on "liberal" as opposed to technical or scientific education. Again, the fact that we were for so long the world's first industrial and imperial power, and emerged relatively unscathed and apparent victors from two World Wars, created a sense that we should always triumph by a natural, effortless superiority, with no need to stoop to the humourless professionalism of Huns or Yanks; and so we stopped thinking in an original, professional way. We were saved, moreover, from detailed and therefore possibly odious comparisons by the existence of the British Channel and the absence of any large-scale wave of immigration. Lastly, a rather rigid class and status system, by inhibiting upward social movement, encouraged an accent on staying-put and family security rather than on personal drive for maximum achievement.

ALL THESE INFLUENCES are of course weakening now. In the economic field, business is gradu-

* P.E.P. *Growth in the British Economy*. Allen & Unwin, 30s.

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ally passing into the hands of younger professionally-minded managers; and there are signs of a reaction against the mood of self-satisfied inertia. Growth-consciousness is at long last spreading; more and more businessmen are anxious to enter the Common Market; and the most radical ideas are coming from the most surprising quarters. It is tempting to see this as one sign of a more general break-through, of a shift in the national mood from complacency to dynamism—to link it with the victory over the Monico site, the rout of the dilettante Old Guard in the theatre, and even the emergence of the Spurs as the first really professional British football-team.

Tempting—but hopelessly optimistic. For the new mood in industry, if indeed it does exist, will come to nothing unless it is matched by a clear lead and new initiative on the part of government. It may be that British industry now *could* expand as fast as its competitors, if it were given the green light to go ahead; things *did* move quite fast in 1954–55 when the Government, with the slogans "invest in success" and "double the standard of living in 25 years," seemed briefly committed to rapid growth. But ever since then every short burst of expansion has been cut short by a deliberate dose of deflation. You can't expect industry to grow rapidly if you thwack it on the head whenever it does so.

The first necessity is therefore an act of leadership by the Government—an explicit commitment to the objective of rapid growth, a broad target for five to ten years ahead, and at least the outline of an investment plan to match this target. But it is here that one grows pessimistic. The Government from which we ask this is the same Government which has just decided, under pressure from the temperance groups, that to extend the licensing hours from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Sundays would fatally threaten the British way of life. With this sort of mentality at the top, we shall *never* get rapid growth in Britain.

C. A. R. Crosland

Space Probe to Venus

Steam, frozen gneiss or incandescent gas?
It plunges outwards to the star of love,
The lifeless metal object, ticking code,
Made by the minds of men who have rejected
All goddesses, and love. It shall wink back
Whether the evening star, the lovers' symbol,
The fairest in the sky, Troy's doom, the apple-winner,
Is steam or frozen rock or scalding gas.

Constantine FitzGibbon

13 February, 1961.

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Mr. Greene's Eggs and Crosses

By Frank Kermode

Oh, is God prodigall? hath he spent his store
of plagues on us, and only now, when more
Would ease us much, doth he grudge misery,
And will not let's enjoy our curse, to dy?

MR. GRAHAM GREENE'S new novel* is so far below one's expectation that the questions arise, was the expectation reasonable, and has there been any previous indication that a failure of this kind was a possibility? So I have been reading the novels since *The Power and the Glory* (1940) and taking some note of what Mr. Greene's by now numerous commentators have said about them. Here one jostles uncomfortably with Waterbury, the critic in *The End of the Affair*, who loses his girl to Bendrix the novelist, which is an allegory and explains what critics (men of limited potency) may expect if they are unpleasant to their betters. Hence their refined envy; it is very noticeable that the best criticism of Mr. Greene is hostile. He himself seems to find it all distasteful, whether it is the adulatory sort that discovers "buried significance . . . of which I was unaware" or the nasty sort that finds "faults I was tired of facing." But critics write for people, not for novelists; a poet commenting on another's work is far more likely to say a line won't do than that it suggests a corruption of consciousness which ought to be purged; the novelist does not need to be told that his technical shortcomings have large moral implications. If Mr. Greene, as I think, was always, on the evidence of his earlier work, likely to write a big serious novel that would die at birth, he knew better than anybody that it was so; this, however, does not excuse Waterbury from doing his bit.

A Burnt-out Case seems to be this novel. Querry, a famous Catholic architect, takes flight from his old life and stops only when he can go no farther, having reached the heart of darkness, a *leproserie* deep in the Congo. His spiritual condition, as he and the devoted but rationalist doctor Colin see it, is parallel to the physical state of a leper in whom the disease, treated too late, has had to run its course; though technically cured he is mutilated, a burnt-out case. Querry is given such a patient as his servant; and when this man runs off into the bush, in search of some lost paradise, Querry follows him and saves his life, watching with him all night. This act, and some modest building operations undertaken for the priests who run the settlement, seem to be working for the restoration of Querry's humanity. But the diagnosis of Querry and Colin is not accepted by some other characters, notably Fr. Thomas, an unstable priest, Rycker, a detestably pious margarine manufacturer, once a seminarist, and Parkinson, a corrupt English journalist. In pressing home his complaint against Rycker, whose high-minded gossip has proved a serious nuisance, Querry is involved with Rycker's unhappy young wife; instead of seducing her he spends the night telling her the story of his life, got up rather archly as a sort of fairy tale. Hating her husband, she announces that Querry is the father of the child she is carrying, and the consequence of this affair, totally anomalous because Querry has been a selfish and successful lover of women, is that Rycker shoots his rival. Querry dies amused at the irony of this; his power over women was always an index of his worldly success, and when he renounced success he renounced women too; but he dies their victim.

THIS FABLE IS CONSTRUCTED with economy and skill. It is a characteristic Greene plot (though less complex than some), for it turns upon a point of comedy, or farce—the husband-wife-lover situation which occurs in a considerable variety of manifestations in the later Greene,

* *A Burnt-out Case*. Heinemann, 16s.

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and with special ingenuity in *The End of the Affair* and *The Complaisant Lover*. (This time the lover is pitying, impotent, and bores the wife all night.) The timing of the story is very exact; the burnt-out leper is not too obtrusive, the talk with the girl is dramatically well-placed, and the catastrophe is arranged like an expert final act: an innocent champagne party with the priests celebrating the erection of a roof-tree on Querry's building, the approaching storm, the arrival of the Ryckers, which ends the story by destroying not only Querry's life but his growing reputation for sanctity. The clinical details of leprosy are tactfully disposed though shocking in the right degree ("the sweet smell of sloughed skin") and the descriptions of tropical river and bush have the moody accuracy one has learned to expect. The idiom is often satisfyingly Greeneian—there is an ample provision of those new proverbs of hell: "it was God's taste to be worshipped and their taste to worship, but only at stated hours like a suburban embrace on a Saturday night;" "suffering is something which will always be provided when required;" and there are some of those sad recondite conceits: "The pouches under his eyes were like purses that contained the smuggled memories of a disappointing life." Everywhere there is evidence of competent arrangements. It is arranged, for instance, that we should not like the priests, yet be forced to meditate on their view of the meaning of the events described. If the texture of these events is thinner than in, say, *The Heart of the Matter*, that merely makes clearer the theme of the book; the problem is not to find a way of saying what this is, but rather to account for the discrepancy between it and the story, the failure to give it a body.

The theme, to name it accurately but perhaps misleadingly, is Heroic Virtue. This term is used during a conversation between Colin and the dreadful, stubborn Fr. Thomas in the lull before the stormy climax of the book. Fr. Thomas is saying what a good thing it was for them that Querry had dropped in and put up this new building. Colin observes that it was an even better thing for Querry himself, who is now almost cured. Fr. Thomas at once reduces Querry's history to a familiar theological term: "the better the man the worse the aridity." He has been determined, ever since he found out who Querry was, to understand him in this language and no other. The doctor protests that they have no application to Querry's case; but the priest answers that whereas the doctor is trained to spot the early symptoms of leprosy, the priest is expert in detecting incipient Heroic Virtue. This is one of the best scenes in the book, full of ironies, little time-bombs planted with short fuses among the illusory satisfactions of the evening; and not the least striking of them is the implicit analogy between leprosy and Heroic Virtue. Fr. Thomas does not use the expression loosely; he has in mind the teaching of the Church on this subject, which, if I understand it, is pretty definite. Between the "political" or "social" virtues and the "divine" or "exemplary" virtues —between the human and the divine—there are intermediate virtues of two degrees of perfection, the first of which are called purifying (*purgatoriae*) and the second "the virtues of the purified soul" (*virtutes iam purgati animi*). Fr. Thomas presumably supposes Querry's bad time to have corresponded to the first of these states, and his present conduct to the second. The condition of Heroic Virtue is distinguished from that of sanctity, though officially described as "rare in this life." Fr. Thomas, in short, is putting Querry pretty high, and in terms of a doctrine which means nothing to Colin or to Querry himself. The situation is characteristic of the author, who is constantly pointing out that human behaviour acquires an entirely different and often disturbing valuation when you consider it in the light of religious doctrine; and the question here is whether you ought to do so, especially when that doctrine is applied mechanically by vulgar and imperceptive people, including priests.

For this religious interpretation of Querry's life is applied by others, and indeed it is the cause of the crisis of the plot. The practice was started by Rycker with his vulgar lust for holiness; then Fr. Thomas odiously takes it up, with his theory of aridity: "Perhaps even now you are walking in the footsteps of St. John of the Cross, the *noche oscura*." He can't get it into their heads that he is merely burnt out. The journalist Parkinson, vulgarised beyond any hope that he might recognise distinctions between truth and falsehood, wants to make of Querry a Sunday-paper Schweitzer, even a saint if that will please Them (his readers). "I wouldn't be surprised if there were pilgrims at your shrine in twenty years, and that's how history's written. *Exegi monumentum*. Quote. Virgil." But divine intervention in human affairs is, as we could have learnt from Mr. Greene, apparently capricious, often tasteless, and quite capable of working through Rycker or Parkinson. Even Colin has his doubts about Querry: "You're too troubled by your lack of faith.... You keep on fingering it like a sore." And Querry himself remembers, "in moments of superstition," that there are religious explanations for his condition; for instance, he thinks that in choosing art he deliberately forfeited

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grace, a point Fr. Thomas would confute simply by indicating his good works.

ON THE WHOLE, however, Querry offers naturalist explanations only, and these, of course, conflict with the others. This is the choice the book offers. Either Querry is right, or God is a plot-maker, working through his inferior priests, through the theological pervert Rycker, through innocence and pity (great enemies of human happiness in Greene); ready to use any degree of absurdity—an incompetent private detective, a preposterous Palais Royal bedroom scene, to get His way. And this is only the crisis; before it God has, on this view, been fostering Querry's self-disgust, making him more and more successful, more and more powerful with women, so as to get him ready for the last strategem.

This is perfectly all right; what goes wrong is the presentation of Querry's alternative explanation. He has recovered from the sickness of faith, and may be getting over the sickness of success. But his way of life has hardened all within and petrified the feeling. He has a dream (Mr. John Atkins in his book reminds us of the extraordinary number of explanatory dreams Mr. Greene's characters have) in which he makes this point: "I can't feel at all, I'm a leper." The one thing he is sure of is that his state has nothing to do with vitality, nobility, or spiritual depth, yet there is this conspiracy to enforce the theory that it has. His identity is discovered in the first place through a cover-drawing in *Time* magazine, which romanticised his features and gave him a soulful, mysterious quality; this is an experience Mr. Greene has had himself. And this is the really important point. Querry, the famous Catholic architect, is a famous Catholic writer thinly disguised; and if it was ever true—as Mr. Greene's hostile critics insist—that the earlier novels are sometimes flawed by the author's inability to stand clear of his hero or victim, it is certainly true of this book.

In one of his long conversations with Colin, Querry explains that he never built except for his own pleasure, and perhaps never loved a woman except for the same reason. "A writer doesn't write for his readers, does he? ... The subject of a novel is not the plot." He makes buildings (books) in which people can be comfortable, but he is not interested in their use, and hardly minds when they are clogged with cheap ornaments (the irrelevant personal rubbish a reader might bring to a book to make it seem lived-in). The real object of writing (building) is selfish: "Self-expression is a hard and selfish thing. It eats everything, even the self. At the end you find you haven't even got a self to express. I have no interest in anything.... I don't want to sleep with a woman or design a building." The difficulty is that Querry's self-explanation is a mere diagram; he has chosen a self-consuming artist's life, perfection of the work. Even when he is drawn into the service of suffering he protests that "Human beings are not my country." For the doctrine of the priests he substitutes not nature but a myth of decadence; there is even a secular version of Fr. Thomas's smug theory of aridity in his talk of the artist's regress. One is driven towards the position taken up by Miss Elizabeth Sewell in a remarkable essay on Mr. Greene published a few years ago in the *Dublin Review*: he is a novelist of the Decadence, writing not as a Catholic but as a neo-Romantic. His heroes, all *maudits*, know nothing of the happiness and hope that are, after all, part of religion; his world is one in which only Faust can be saved, and the victimised postures of his heroes are ultimately Faustian. I should want to modify Miss Sewell's account of the basic myth, but there seems no doubt that Querry, more than any other of the heroes, is a poseur, and ought not to be if the conflict between religious and secular interpretations of his life is to have a valid basis.

This issue becomes very acute in the fairy-tale version of his life which Querry tells Mme. Rycker to put her to sleep. Reviewers have called this embarrassing; yet it is the marrow of the book. It exposes the falsity of Querry's position, not because the stupid priests are necessarily right, but because their view of the matter can be fully and ironically presented but this decadent mythology cannot. He speaks of a man who has not been able to detect the hand of God in human life; who sees virtue rewarded by the death of a child (the crucial test of God in *The Heart of the Matter*) and viciousness punished only invisibly. Instead of being a great artist he became a sort of Fabergé, making ingenious jewels and enjoying many women. God refused to allow him to suffer. But although people thought he must be very good to have such rewards from God—as others who got their legs cut off in accidents must be very bad—he found that, unable to suffer, he was unable to love. His jewels were fashionable, and people said he was not only a master-technician but dealt with serious subject-matter, because he made eggs with gold crosses on top, "set with precious stones in honour of the King." About this time a mistress committed suicide, without his being much disturbed. Then, as popular favour waned, the connoisseurs took him up. "They began to write books about his art; especially those who claimed to know and love the King" calling him, for instance, "the Jeweller of

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Original Sin." For "jeweller" one reads "architect = Querry = novelist = ?" (Mr. Greene has said before that a novel is always a kind of confession.) At this point the jeweller sees that his work has nothing to do with love, the love of the King for his people; and he wonders, as the whole plot of Mr. Greene's novel does, whether his unbelief and the ugliness of his success are not finally proof of the King's existence. While he has been talking the night away the King has in fact been at work, in the shape of the prying Parkinson, ensuring that this "success" will amount in the end to the same thing as failure, that so much more desirable fate. Only failures can be good, and God is a specialist in failure. Querry is to have his suffering; "with suffering we become part of the Christian myth." He dies not for his own crimes but for those of the Ryckers; as in *The Heart of the Matter* this is a case of *victimage*, like Huysmans refusing morphia for cancer of the throat.

THE ARTIST'S lust for suffering can be called a leading theme of Mr. Greene's. There is a hint of it in the famous autobiographical piece, "The Revolver in the Corner Cupboard." Since the acceptance of God entails pain, it is a theme to be found in *The End of the Affair*. It is strongly present in this book, a dominant, but not fully embodied theme; and behind it is something less easy to extract, the persistent notion of God as the enemy, whose disastrous invasion of human life is called by theologians love. Let us look, without making too much of it, at the little emblem of the egg-jewel with the cross on top. On the world of natural generation is stuck, incongruous, the heraldic device of God. Mr. Greene's books are like that. We could get along, better perhaps since He is so interested in pain, without God. Scobie's situation would have been tolerable if the egg had no cross; his wife uses the pledge of God's love to torment him, and out of love he comes to death; even death is worse with God, since one cannot take it out of His hands without wounding Him. (To the non-believer like Fowler in *The Quiet American* death is something one may reasonably desire, like sex, though, virgins all, we may be scared of it as well as attracted.) The harshness of Mr. Greene's Christianity is that the unforgivable sins are the most tempting, and that however unreasonable God may be He is also strong, and has somehow convinced us that He is easily hurt. How much easier to be a Stoic! Sometimes it seems that the disaster—that aboriginal calamity—that fell upon us was not the Fall but God (who foresaw without willing it). Ever since His arrival on the scene the good human emotions, and chiefly pity, are dangerous, innocence an evil trap. Querry is only the last of Greene heroes to be caught in it. They belong only to the nursery paradise, not to the wild woods forlorn of the fallen. Scobie has to pray *not* to be a decent fellow, but to do the will of a master who allows children to die after surviving forty days in a ship's boat, so that he may save his soul; but pity frustrates him. The priest in *The Power and the Glory* is obsessed with the need to protect God from himself. Sin is the shadow thrown by the strong light of God; Mr. Greene is of the devil's party and comes near to knowing it. God's priests are rarely up to much; the natural man has little time for the voluntary eunuch. This only strengthens the case against Him; He has made us as we are and expects us, on terrible penalties, to behave otherwise; He would not leave us in the state of the amoeba, yet He denies us adult brains. "Why did He give us genitals if he wanted us to think clearly?" ("Vainly begot, and yet forbidden vanity, Created sick, commanded to be sound.") Once the intellect accepts God (Mr. Greene has emphasised that his reception into the Church was a result of intellectual rather than emotional conviction) a terrible incongruity invades human affairs; confronted with that image human sex becomes fury and mire. The natural man can scarcely act without alienating Him; there is even a feeling that the ugly shapes of the world are caused by this constraint. Yet if He wants heroes He has to find them among the dying generations; He must work in the fury and the mire. *A Burnt-out Case* may be read as an account of His doing so, confronted with a naturalist account of the same events.

THE RESULTANT TENSION might make a great book; it does not have that effect here, or anywhere else except in *The End of the Affair*. The *Power and the Glory* sometimes comes near to a full realisation, with its well-placed sermon on pain and fear as "part of heaven," the paradoxical emphasis on the beauty of sin, especially sexual sin (as in the passage with the pious old maid and the shameless copulators in prison) and the perversely high valuation put upon suffering. The priest's surprised admission that his enemy, the lieutenant, is "a good man," and the determined irrationalism of his conduct, especially at the crisis, silently stress the obsessive theme, the use God makes of wantonly unsuitable material for humanly detestable ends. And, as nearly always in Mr. Greene, the concept of mortal sin, so incredible on the human view of decency, is continually eroded by reservations of all sorts. But it is true that this endless complaint about God seems less to

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be shaping the book than tearing it apart, and I think it is on this score that *The Power and the Glory* has had some damaging criticism, notably from F. N. Lees, who thinks it never becomes "the study of will and conduct," it seems to aim at being, but sinks into "self-condemnatory reverie"; instead of an "evaluating vision of a situation" we get a ventriloquial performance with an interesting dummy. Mr. Lees argues from evidences of strain in the language of the book; Mr. Hoggart, with a very nice understanding of its qualities, comes nevertheless, though from a different direction, to the same conclusion: "we are in the presence of an unusually controlled allegory.... The characters have a kind of life, but that life is always breathed into them by Greene's breath. In Greene's novels we do not 'explore experience'; we meet Graham Greene." Though I think both these criticisms are too severe, one sees what brought them into being; Mr. Greene's war against the intolerable God his intellect accepts is an extremely personal matter, and its obsessive presence is felt everywhere, colouring, distorting, taking the place of, more generalised "experience," suggesting that "will and conduct" are only defensive tactics in the struggle with omnipotence.

IT WOULD SEEM that the way out of this is to objectify the obsession, to embody the God-hatred in the fiction. *The Heart of the Matter* in a way does this; much of the torment comes from the position that natural knowledge, knowledge of sex, is real, and knowledge of God by comparison notional; if you abuse a woman she will be hurt or angry, but you can insult and debase God without His giving any sign. So a man damns himself out of pity for those who cry out; that, at any rate, is what the rules say, and if there is an escape clause ("the appalling strangeness of the mercy of God") we cannot be sure of its application. Scobie is Greene's greatest expert in proverbs of hell, in "the loyalty we all feel to unhappiness—the sense that that is where we really belong." He is cursed by an awareness of "the weakness of God" and by integrity-destroying pity; sufficiently of God's party to know that failure alone is lovable, but critical of the divine arrangements ("Couldn't we have committed our first major sin at seven, have ruined ourselves for love or hate at ten, have clutched at redemption on a fifteen-year-old death-bed?") Consequently, "as for God, he could speak to him only as one speaks to an enemy." In the end he propagates suffering instead of preventing it by total self-sacrifice, because God will not allow one to arrange the happiness of others

6

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as one wishes. As to the "eternal sentence" which our intellectual knowledge of God insists to have been Scobie's due, it is pronounced for an act of which the human significance is trivial, the theft of a little bread. But of course there is Fr. Rank to say we do not understand God, that Scobie's conduct may be divinely construed as love of God. Mr. Lees observes with severity that this remark is misplaced, since we know, as God does, what has gone on in Scobie's mind, and "if at his death we don't know that he *won't* go to Heaven, we most certainly don't know that he *will*." This is part of a charge that the novelist gives uncritical assent to Scobie's "shouldering of the world's whole weight," and indeed he is a classic case of *victimage*, with the priest brought in to say that nobody can affirm this "decadent" position to be erroneous. But I do not see that there is total identification of author and character here; the point of the revelation that Mrs. Scobie knew very well what she was doing when she coaxed her erring husband to Mass is that he was wanting in self-knowledge in a matter where you would expect a policeman not to be; he bungles an ordinary appraisal of human suspicion; and to this extent Mr. Greene is saying that Scobie had a *wrong* idea of himself. But the main issue of the book is not fully discussed: it is that Scobie's intolerable position is plotted by God; He demands more love and pity than anybody else and ought not to get them. Even specialists in Him know far more about his demands than about his benefactions; it is his mercy, not his justice, that is unfamiliar, "appallingly strange." A good man should not be treated as Scobie is. But all this lurks immediately under the surface of the book's argument; the egg is not allowed to speak out against the Cross.

THIS SPEAKING out was delayed until *The End of the Affair*, and this seems almost beyond question Mr. Greene's masterpiece, his fullest and most completely realised book. Mr. Lees says the opening paragraph is uneasily slack; but in a deliberately tentative way it disposes of a remarkable amount of information. A novelist, a good technician launching what purports to be a straightforward narrative but at the same time foreseeing Conradian complexities, hesitates deliberately over the arbitrary but necessary starting-point; and he wants the essential fact of his being a writer, and the other essential fact of his new, odious, belief in God, to get said at once. Bendrix is not a Scobie but the hero Mr. Greene has needed: a natural man who sees this God as a natural man would, as unscrupulous rival, corrupter of human happiness, spoiler of the egg; and a novelist who hates Him as a superior technician. Bendrix's book is plotted by God, a testimony to His structural powers. And we get for the first and only time the real Satanic thing, the courage never to submit or yield. All this is germinal in the first page, which contains sentences crucial to the entire *œuvre*: "If hate is not too large a term to use in relation to any human being, I hated Henry."..."He surely must have hated his wife and that other, in whom in those days *we were lucky enough not to believe*." Bendrix's fury in the end is that of the trapped: everything from onions to the absurd private detective, the rationalist lectures, Arbuckle Avenue, flying bombs, miracles that can be explained away, is economically employed by the Plotter. And just as Bendrix is a potent enough novelist to take away the critic's girl, God is a good enough one to take away his, even though she doesn't want to go; He plants in her not only love of him but His favourite Augustinian reluctance ("...but not yet") to increase the pain. "Dear God, you know I want Your pain, but I don't want it now."

THE UNWILLING sanctification of Sarah is a difficult theme, and leads the novelist into some expressions that may seem excessive, though hardly ever in the rapt context; and God's perversity and skill are remembered even by Sarah, who takes the deforming strawberry mark as His image, and remembers how unfairly He used Bendrix to His own ends. It is a mark of the difference of this book that the last words are shared between the frigid priest and Bendrix, and Bendrix is very explicit: "I know Your cunning. It's You who take us up to a high place and offer us the whole universe. You're a devil, God, tempting us to leap." He can no longer refuse to believe in the disastrous existence of God; but he can still separate the idea from love. But God may not have finished with him. This is another love-triangle, but even the hate necessarily generated may be converted by Him into an inhuman love. The book ends with Bendrix praying for the peace of the natural man, burnt out. It is the only novel to offer a full statement of the case for the fornicating human victim, for the energy as well as the sadness of hell, and the case against the God who inflicts, as with love, that pain from which the pleasure-loving flesh continually shrinks. Mr. Lees calls Bendrix an evil man, and the book gives him some right to do so; but this reminds one again of the genuine proverb of hell, that hell is energy; and the difference between the vicious energy of Bendrix and the rigidly self-conscious despair of Querry is a fair

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measure of the difference in quality between the two books. Querry is too clearly a surrogate; the argument about Heroic Virtue is also a substitute, too partial, too technical perhaps, to bear the weight of the real theme: natural happiness, defeated not by success or surfeit, but by God and His love.

Jean-Paul Sartre

Jean-Paul Sartre: A Literary and Political Study: By PHILIP THODY. *Hamish Hamilton.* 21s.

WHATEVER one may think of Sartre's philosophy, there is no doubt that he is both a very gifted writer and an exceedingly intelligent man. It is the quality of his intelligence that gives its unity to the astonishingly wide range of his work. Sartre is not just a philosopher who happens also to be a novelist, a playwright, a short-story writer, a writer of film scripts, a literary critic, a magazine editor, a political essayist, and a practical politician. All these activities are occasions for the display of his philosophical ideas. It is arguable indeed that more insight is to be gained into his philosophy by studying his literary and dramatic works than by concentrating on those which are straightforwardly philosophical. Until the recent appearance of the first volume of his *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, which is more a contribution to social history than a piece of technical philosophising, his most important philosophical work has been *L'Etre et le Néant*, which is remarkable chiefly for the sharpness of its psychological analysis: on the purely philosophical side it remains within the leading strings of German existentialism, and is marked by the same trickiness and obscurity. The novels and plays, on the other hand, reveal not only psychological acumen but a fascinating and highly individual attitude to life.

It would seem, therefore, that Mr. Philip Thody, who has followed up his sympathetic and intelligent study of Albert Camus with a scholarly review of the literary and political outlook of Sartre, has not lost very much by excluding from his survey Sartre's more technical contributions to philosophy. Mr. Thody's method is to examine the works seriatim, beginning with the novels and short stories, then going on to the plays, continuing with the literary criticism and ending with the theoretical and practical incursions into politics. When the purely philosophical works are left out of consideration, this roughly follows the chronological order of Sartre's literary development. Mr. Thody performs his task conscientiously but the impression left by his book is that he found it only moderately enjoyable. Sartre is never dull, but there are times when he is rather prolix. He finds it difficult to leave an idea alone and there is a point where the fascination of watching him at play may yield to a certain feeling of impatience or even to a hint of boredom. Mr. Thody clearly feels this to be true of *Saint Genet Comédien et Martyr*, Sartre's introduction to the works of Jean Genet, in which the theme of salvation through diabolism and eventually through art is developed for nearly six hundred pages. He suggests that the time and energy which Sartre devoted to this work might have been spent to better purpose, and with this I agree. He also takes a very harsh view of Sartre's main venture into literary criticism *Qu'est-ce que la Littérature*, describing it as "pompous, tendentious, superficial, and inaccurate," but here I think he goes too far. Certainly some of the literary judgments are a little strange, and the generalisations open to exception, but the case for a socially responsible literature, *une littérature engagée*, is forcibly and ingeniously argued. In general Mr. Thody is inclined to dissent from Sartre's conclusions, though he acknowledges the subtlety of much of the reasoning on which they are founded.

One of the most interesting points which emerges from Mr. Thody's survey is the way in which Sartre's increasing absorption in politics is reflected in his work. The main themes do not change; there is always the emphasis on man's freedom of choice, on the contrast between inanimate objects, which just are what they are, and conscious agents whose character is always in question because they are responsible for making it; there is the constant preoccupation with the problem of sincerity, the concern with the prevalence, or even the inevitability of some form of *mauvaise foi*. But whereas in the early writings the individual's need to realise himself is set against the claims which are made upon him by the society in which he lives, the implication of Sartre's more recent work is that the way to personal salvation, if it exists at all, is to be found in the assumption of social responsibility. The protagonist of Sartre's first published novel, *La Nausée*, and the leading character in *Les Séquestrés d'Altona*, his most recent play, are both men who reject the world as it is: but while Roquentin, in *La Nausée*, appears to have the sympathy of the author in his romantic attitude of contempt for bourgeois values, and physical disgust at the facticity of the world and even the texture of material things, Franz, in *Les Séquestrés d'Altona*, is a man who seeks a social justification for his past; in his case the

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justification is a fake, but it is not implied that he was wrong to seek it. The same point emerges from a comparison of the two most successful of Sartre's plays, *Huis Clos*, which was first produced in 1944, and *Les Mains Sales*, which appeared four years later at a time when Sartre was engaged in his ill-starred attempt to organise an independent left-wing political party. The burden of *Huis Clos* is that we are at the mercy of other people because it is their verdict which determines what we are: this is the point of the saying that *l'enfer, c'est les autres*. The only thing of moral importance to any of the characters is their ability, in the face of the others, to maintain their own picture of themselves. In *Les Mains Sales*, the moral perspective is quite different. The stress is now laid not on the individual's subjection to others but on his responsibility for them. The main question is how far a political leader may be justified in sacrificing principle to expediency, how far the end can be held to consecrate the means. It is interesting to note that the central figure of this play, the revolutionary leader Hoederer is, with the possible exception of the Communist Brunet in the trilogy of novels *Les Chemins de la Liberté*, the only one of Sartre's characters to be accorded heroic stature. The reason for this is that he combines a realistic outlook on politics with personal integrity and most importantly, as Mr. Thody remarks, with love and respect for his fellow men. For while Sartre himself is certainly to be classified as a humanist, this is not generally true of the characters whom he creates.

Les Mains Sales, as Mr. Thody also notices, provides a good illustration of Sartre's ambivalent attitude towards Communism. He has never joined the Communist Party and he has at times been sharply critical of it, especially with respect to the Russian labour camps and the suppression of the Hungarian rising. But except in the case of Hungary, his tendency has always been to play down the faults of the Communists as compared with those of their Western enemies. His attacks on American bellicosity, on Western colonialism and racial prejudice, are commonly much sharper than those that he can bring himself to make upon their Russian counterparts. His attitude towards the Communist Party in France is rather that of a husband who finds his wife impossible to live with, and has gone so far as to announce that he will no longer be responsible for her debts, but still does not contemplate suing for divorce. The reasons why he cannot set himself against the Communists is that they are the only party which speaks for the working class: and it is necessary to identify oneself with the interests of the working class because at this present stage of history the working class has been elected as the vehicle of progress.

This reasoning is characteristic not only of Sartre's deference to Marxism, which he now declares to be the only possible philosophy for our time, but also of the Cartesianism which has always been a dominant factor in his thinking. It is true that in the *Critique de la Raison Dialectique* he reproaches contemporary Marxists with their failure to modify their theories in the light of the facts, but he himself has always had a marked predilection for *a priori* arguments. His support for the Communists is not based on an empirical study of Communist policies; it takes no account of the transformation which has occurred in different countries of the character, position, and outlook of the working class; it simply depends on treating certain concepts in Descartes' fashion as clear and distinct ideas, and then making deductive inferences from them. As an existentialist, Sartre is bound to lay emphasis on concrete experience, but his existentialism itself is curiously abstract.

Moreover, when Sartre does seek support from the facts, his sampling of evidence is highly selective. Just as on psychological matters he is inclined to generalise from abnormal cases, so when it comes to social questions he seldom looks beyond France. A large percentage of French industrial workers do still vote Communist; but it would be highly paradoxical to claim that in England or the United States the Communists even "objectively" represented the working class. When Sartre claims in his brilliant essay on anti-semitism, *Réflexions sur la question juive*, that anti-semitism is a *petit-bourgeois* phenomenon, not found to any great extent among the upper or working classes, he does not consider that, even in the doubtful event of this being true of France, it may not hold elsewhere, and especially not in the eastern European countries where anti-semitism is strongest. The bourgeois whose values he attacks is the French bourgeois, and one who is represented as having changed very little since the time of Baudelaire.

These are serious criticisms; but whatever the defects of his method, Sartre's social commitment is genuine and impressive. In this country only Bertrand Russell responds with such intelligence and fervour to the moral and social issues of our time. This is not a vindication of Sartre's philosophy: we are not required to be Existentialists or Marxists; but with his sense of political responsibility Sartre does set an example which more of us would do well to follow.

A. J. Ayer

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Precursors of Lenin

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union. By LEONARD SCHAPIRO. *Eyre & Spottiswoode.* 63s.

Roots of Revolution. By FRANCO VENTURI. *Weidenfeld & Nicolson.* 63s.

IN THE EARLY 1870s a group of young intellectuals in what was then Petersburg held frequent meetings in a library facetiously known as the "Jacobin Club." They were among the more prominent leaders of the nascent Populist movement, and by way of heightening the confusion inseparable from all Russian revolutionary activities, they had no sympathy whatever with Jacobinism. In so far as they possessed a political platform, it has been described—by the author of one of the two books here under review, Professor Venturi—as "a Populism which... modified both the anarchism of Bakunin and the socialism of Lavrov." The principal ideologist of the group, Chaikovsky, introduced a religious element into its outlook and even went so far as to describe it as "an Order." The Order subsequently merged with the wider "going to the people" movement which in due course was suppressed and sprouted terrorist tendencies, its final phase issuing into the conspiratorial activities which in 1887 led to the execution of Lenin's brother. To make things more difficult for the historian, Chaikovsky himself gradually abandoned his early belief in an imminent socialist revolution, and in 1917 told a friend: "Naturally we shall have a bourgeois-democratic republic...." Guided by this conviction, the grand old man of Populism sided against the Bolsheviks during the ensuing civil war, and for a while headed the "White" rebel government at Archangel.

Meanwhile, however, various dissident currents had branched off from the mainstream of the 1870s, including some which took the "Jacobin" label more seriously. Indeed as far back as 1862—about a year after the inadequate reform measures abolishing serfdom—a clandestine pamphlet signed *"Young Russia"* had frightened the authorities out of their wits with a genuinely "Jacobin" vision of a radical revolution that would "unfurl the great banner of the future, the red banner" (and incidentally lead to the storming of the Winter Palace and the massacre of the Tsar and the Imperial family). Its chief author, the student Zaichnevsky, was a student of Herzen (and Feuerbach), and the papers confiscated by the police upon his speedy arrest included a half-finished translation of Proudhon's major work *What is Property?* In the late 1870s, Zaichnevsky's ideas cropped up again among the self-styled "Jacobin" group of Peter Tkachev, whose followers also introduced two other interesting notions: centralised organisation, and the need to "implement all the transformations demanded by the Socialists, not from below, but the other way round." Tkachev's disciples included a former woman associate of Nechaev (known to all readers of Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* as Shigalov, though in fact the portrait is wildly misleading) who subsequently joined the terrorist group which assassinated Alexander II on March 1st, 1881. And so, by way of the gradual dissolution of the original *Land and Liberty* group (and the equally gradual dissemination of its doctrines among the wider Socialist movement of the 1880s and 1890s), we end by finding ourselves on the threshold of Leninism.

OR DO WE? In his minute analysis of the Populist movement, which unfortunately carries the story only down to 1881, Professor Venturi gives no explicit answer to this question. When one turns to Mr. Leonard Schapiro's equally massive and learned history of Lenin's party, from its founding around 1900 to the present day, the picture becomes clearer, but there remains a residue of uncertainty. It seems evident enough that Lenin's organisational model owed something to Tkachev's "neo-Jacobin" doctrine, and in so far as "Jacobinism"—at any rate in

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its Russian setting—stressed the key role of an enlightened ruling minority, we may say that something like the notion of a revolutionary *élite* was implicit in all this theorising. But the trouble is that conspiracy and *élite*-worship were inseparable likewise from the activities of those Populists who repudiated what they conceived to be the "Jacobin," *i.e.*, dictatorial, heresy of Tkachev. Lastly, of course, there is the fact that all these debates occurred before the Russian labour movement had developed, and before the founding of a Marxist Social-Democratic party in the 1890s. On balance, the reader is likely to accept Mr. Schapiro's conclusion that Bolshevism signified a revival of earlier tendencies, and that in the crucial 1903–4 split with the Mensheviks, "Lenin was, though perhaps not consciously, already looking towards an immediate socialist revolution." This would account for his insistence upon an organisational model which made no sense if the coming revolution—as visualised by the orthodox Marxists: Plekhanov, Potressov, and Axelrod—was to be primarily a democratic one, at any rate in its first stage. The remarkable thing is that Lenin seems to have been only dimly aware of the link between his political and his organisational platform. If told that he favoured extreme centralisation because he subconsciously intended to fasten a socialist dictatorship upon a backward country, he would have repudiated the charge with all the Social-Democratic arguments at his command, and with a fairly good conscience as well.

It would clearly be unreasonable to expect much light to be shed on this topic by present-day Soviet historians. During the first few years after the 1917 upheaval, it was indeed still possible to hint that Bolshevism might have had a political ancestry leading back, via Tkachev, to Jacobinism (or, to be exact, Blanquism: for when Zaichnevsky and his followers invoked the Jacobins, they were commonly guided by their admiration for the Blanquist school of French socialism). In later years such historical investigations became distinctly unhealthy, especially after Stalin had laid down the line in historical research as in everything else. At the time of Lenin's death in 1924, Pokrovsky—then the leading authority on party history and a genuine "Old Bolshevik"—could still afford to toy with the heretical notion that Lenin might be primarily a Russian revolutionary, rather than the leader of an international "proletarian" movement. It is evident that in referring to the "Jacobin" heritage of Zaichnevsky and Tkachev, Pokrovsky felt distinctly uncomfortable, yet he publicly acknowledged that

> various elements in the Russian revolutionary movement of the 1860s and 1870s flowed into

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> Lenin's tactics, were accepted by him, independent of the fact that well-known objective conditions moved him along this path.

What path? Why, the path leading to a minority dictatorship in a backward country! Nor was Pokrovsky alone in thus "Bolshevising the past." On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Bakunin's death in 1926, another Soviet historian flatly declared that the founder of Anarchism had to be counted among Lenin's spiritual ancestors.

> Bakunin and Tkachev are the two poles and at the same time the two greatest heights to which the Russian revolutionary thought of the 1870s had risen. It is not surprising that everything valuable in their teaching should have entered into that Marxist synthesis of the experience of the European and the Russian revolutionary movement which is called Leninism.

These were indeed dangerous thoughts. That they expressed an obvious truth mattered nothing in comparison with the embarrassment of having to admit that Bolshevism had entered into the inheritance of the despised Narodniki. In the 1930s all such suggestions were gradually outlawed, and the Marxist purity of Lenin's thinking might no longer be called in question. The official historians were now called upon to confirm the earlier judgment of one of their number that "the revolutionary ideas of Zaichnevsky and Tkachev are not the roots of Bolshevism at all, but the last blossoms of the great French revolution on the unreceptive Russian soil." Moreover, "we find absolutely no elements of proletarian socialism in the social programmes of Zaichnevsky and Tkachev." That of course was just the trouble: the Bolshevik revolution had at all cost to be "proletarian." Hence the Russian "Jacobins" and "Blanquists" must not be among its forerunners!

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Longmans

When and how was the gap actually bridged by those Socialists who in the 1880s and 1890s turned from Populism to Marxism? The reader who comes from Professor Venturi's analysis of the Populist movement (down to 1881) to Mr. Schapiro's closely-reasoned and heavily-footnoted history of Bolshevism (after 1900) may have cause to regret that the intervening two decades have not been investigated with the same minute care. It was none the less during these formative years that the decisive mental step was taken by former Narodniki—Plekhanov among them—who subsequently reappear as the founders of Russian Marxism. How did they rationalise their conversion to the Social-Democratic creed? One gets a glimpse from Mr. Schapiro's observation that to Plekhanov the acceptance of Marxism signified primarily a novel manner of viewing the coming revolution: instead of seizure of power by conspirators in the interest of a rapidly disintegrating peasantry, there was to be the formation of a "workers' party" (which, however, would be mostly led by intellectuals), with the aim of overthrowing the Tsarist régime. For Plekhanov it went without saying that in this coming upheaval the proletariat must take the lead and indeed establish its "hegemony." The quarrel with Lenin came later. All this had a far from academic ring in Russia, and it remained practical politics *in Eastern Europe* down to the Second World War. Hence the attraction of Bolshevism for revolutionary Socialists from Poland down to the Balkans—including instinctive rebels and libertarians like Djilas, for whom Leninism (not "Marxism"!) remained the only political model appropriate to their experience. For the Bolsheviks had overthrown an autocratic régime in the name of "proletarian revolution": the only revolution possible in a backward country.

The story of how Lenin's party—and subsequently Stalin's party—managed to establish its control is related by Mr. Schapiro with a wealth of detail which places every serious student in

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his debt. It is the great value of his work that it is firmly centred on the evolution of the real core of Bolshevism: the apparatus of the party and its leadership. In this manner the essential continuity of Leninist-Stalinist policies is brought out, as against the romantic notion that Stalin somehow "ruined" the revolution, or at any rate prevented Trotsky—or Bukharin, or some other aspirant to leadership—from executing "Lenin's testament" with greater fidelity. It is difficult to see how such notions can survive a dispassionate study of the record. Trotsky himself, by constantly wavering between the incompatible standpoints of Bolshevism and Menshevism, did a great deal to confuse what was in essence a very simple issue: should Russia follow the Western pattern and gradually Europeanise herself, or was the Russian revolution destined to signify, among other things, a profound breach with Europe? To-day we know the answer; it is instructive to see in retrospect that the debate, having once started in the 1860s, never really stopped, and that Lenin's ambiguous personality acquires a profounder significance against the background of the Russian intelligentsia's internal schisms a century ago.

We may still witness the day when Western experts, newspaper editorialists, even statesmen and ex-ambassadors, will abandon the obstinate search for Marxist categories in every current Soviet pronouncement, and begin to acquaint themselves and their readers with the alarming notion that Leninism is a profoundly Russian phenomenon, with roots in the pre-Marxist past: an ideology, in short, which challenges comparison with other national myths. At any rate it can no longer be claimed that the historians have not told us where to look.

It might even be argued that some of the earliest *dramatis personæ* saw the future with considerable clarity and had a better grasp of the central problem—the weakness of the libertarian tradition in Russia—than many who came later, not excluding some writers currently fashionable. Professor Venturi quotes a curious remark made in 1871 by one of Chaikovsky's followers:

> There is only one group... that is really interested in political liberty, and that is our intelligentsia. But it is too weak, and taken by itself it is materially impotent in the struggle against absolutism. For these reasons, our intelligentsia, which for the most part has socialist inclinations, will not fight for a Constitution pure and simple....

The man who made that penetrating observation had the root of the matter in him.

George Lichtheim

Vladimir Nabokov

Macabre, wryly funny and styled in dazzlingly brilliant prose, LAUGHTER IN THE DARK is just published at 15/-. Also available are Nabokov's POEMS (12/6) a witty and incisive verse commentary on the contemporary scene, and THE SONG OF IGOR'S CAMPAIGN (18/-), his translation of the 12th century Russian epic.

Saul Bellow

DANGLING MAN (15/-) is an introspective, subtle and rebellious novel about a man awaiting call-up—dangling between war and peace. It is described by Edmund Wilson as 'one of the most honest pieces of testimony on the psychology of a whole generation'. Also published recently, under the editorship of Saul Bellow, Keith Botsford and Jack Ludwig is THE NOBLE SAVAGE 2 (12/6), one of the most enterprising literary reviews of recent years.

Mayakovsky

For too long this great Russian playwright and poet has been known to the West by hearsay only. In THE BEDBUG & SELECTED POETRY (21/-), translated by George Reavey and Max Hayward and edited and introduced by Patricia Blake, the essence of his achievement is laid open for judgement by English-speaking readers.

John Broderick

THE PILGRIMAGE (13/6) is the first novel of a young Irish writer. Julian Green describes the book as 'a superb piece of work... few will deny that you are a born novelist', and *The Spectator* commented 'His account of violent emotions recalls Mauriac'.

WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON

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Shaw's Musical Ear

How to Become a Musical Critic. By George Bernard Shaw. Edited with an Introduction by Dan H. Laurence. *Hart-Davis.* 25s.

Mr. Laurence has run to earth a multitude of music criticisms not included in those contained in the Standard Edition of Shaw's output. He has even traced and located the notice written when Wagner conducted in the Albert Hall in June, 1877. Shaw was then within three weeks of his twenty-first birthday, and he tackled "Herr Wagner" with aplomb:

> He does not lack vigour, but his beat is nervous and abrupt; the player's intuition is of no avail to warn him when it will come; and the tempo is capriciously hurried or retarded without any apparent reason.

Shaw came by his first job as music-critic strangely. George John Vandeleur Lee, the dandruffed singing-teacher friend of Shaw's mother, palmed himself off on the Editor of *The Hornet* as an authority on music, arranging that young Shaw wrote the notices for him, anonymously. But even as a novice, Shaw "signed" nearly everything, even routine stuff, for example:

> At the Albert Hall, a portion of Bach's St. Matthew Passion was performed by Mr. Barnaby's choir. We say a portion because the omissions were extensive, justified by the necessity for accommodating a work of singular religious intensity to the tastes of an audience only half content to simulate an interest in what the majority of them are incapable of appreciating. The full force of Bach's treatment of the scriptural narrative is of a kind which can be felt only by unsophisticated or highly cultivated communities.

Shaw wrote this of Bach while still "not of age" and, moreover, wrote it in a period during which English musicians in general knew little of Bach.

"Did he really know much about music?" The question is still asked by professional musicians. Myself, I can only say that I wish I could be sure I know half as much. "When my articles on music first began to attract some attention," wrote Shaw in his maturity, "the cream of the joke was supposed to be the fact that I knew nothing whatever about music." "What put it into your head to write about music?" was a question aimed at him persistently. When he told them that music happened to be the art he knew most about, even his best friends "turned away, cruelly disappointed by a prosaic explanation which seemed to rob my exploits of all their merit."

Shaw as a fact was born in a home mellifluous and strident with music; he took to Mozart with his mother's milk. In proof of his musical equipment, he could naïvely boast, to his life's end, that all his family "could pick-out tunes on the piano and support them with the chords of the tonic, sub-dominant, and tonic again." Proudly he would add, "Even a Neapolitan sixth was not beyond them." Shaw's trouble as music critic in this country was that he obviously wasn't a specialist. How should a man know music—that is, of course, know all about counterpoint and enharmonic changes—if also he runs around municipal chambers and vestries, talking Socialism (not to mention Marx), and airing his views on painting and the drama; and writing plays as well—and such plays? To this day, the strictly brought-up English musician, College, or Guildhall product, is inclined to look suspiciously at the music critic who is uncertificated, without diploma, undoctored. The music-critic who relaxes now and then into, say, cricket, is at once eyed dubiously; for all the world as though the credentials of Richard Strauss as a composer might be questionable because he liked to spend lots of time playing at the card table. What of Mozart and his billiards? In this present year of the "serial" fashion, dare I whisper in the ears of inveterate Schönbergians that, in a charming little book recently written by Dr. Otto Klemperer, we are told that Schönberg plays ping-pong—*"Er spielte Tennis und Ping-Pong, liebte aber nur galante Gegner, da er durchaus immer gewinnen wollte"?*

To startle and disappoint his sceptical pundit readers Shaw would sometimes go on like this. (He is discussing, in 1885, proposals to establish a standard musical pitch.) "Expert players of wind instruments can modify the pitch of the notes they produce very considerably by their blowing, by turning the embouchure, drawing out mouthpieces, crooks, tuning slides, washers, and other devices. They have to do this constantly, even when playing at the pitch for which their instruments were designed. . . . The clarinet alone is said to be intractable, but as every clarinet player is expected to possess at least three instruments, in A, in B flat and C respectively, something can be done to meet the difficulty by considering the A clarinet as a clarinet in B flat."

The "blarney" is delicious yet. At its best, Shaw's writing on music has seldom been equalled for understanding of style and for technical knowledge pertinently applied. Here he is, dealing with Beecham and Mozart:

> . . . I began instantly to suspect that Sir Thomas is very fond of 18th-century music and does not care twopence about the specific Mozart. When the great duet came [the occasion of this criticism is a performance of *The Marriage of Figaro* at Drury Lane, July 1917], he treated the few

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eloquent notes of exordium as if they were merely pianists' chords to fix the key; and of the wonderful opening-out of feeling which comes with the first words of Susanna I could not detect a trace. But the conclusive test was the sestet following Figaro's discovery of his parentage. How fine a piece of music that is, and how much it makes of a rather trivial though affectionate situation, Sir Thomas will never know until he has fulfilled his destiny by conducting some of Mozart's greatest church music. . . . Nothing came of the sestet. . . . But when it came to *Dove sono*, the conductor was really great; he squeezed every drop of nectar it contains out for us to the very last drop. . . . The sentimental parts of the opera were nursed with the tenderest care; but the dramatic and rhetorical parts were treated as so much pretty decorative music. . . . It is true that Mozart made no attempt to write political music in the sense of expressing not only wounded human feeling but the specific rancour of the class-conscious proletarian; but the wounded feeling is provided for very plentifully if only the conductor will allow the singer to put it in instead of treating him as if he were one of the second violins. That power of juggling with music which enabled Mozart to force dramatic expression upon purely decorative musical forms makes it possible for a conductor to treat any of his numbers as merely a sonata or rondo or what not; and this is very much what Sir Thomas does, except when he comes to the beauty bits which appeal to him by their feminine sweetness. In conducting Wagner or Strauss he could not do so, because if he ignored the dramatic element there would be nothing left but senseless sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. In Mozart's case what is left is a very elegant and pretty sonata movement; and with this Sir Thomas is quite satisfied.

Whatever we may think of Shaw's view of Beecham as a Mozart conductor, we are bound to admire the penetration of these remarks on Mozart as dramatic composer working in forms and patterns of the pre-Beethoven and pre-Wagner fertilisation of music by drama. Shaw had really no time for music which is not more than music, and has no overtones, no appeal to the thinking man, no significances definable more or less in terms dramatic, metaphysical, or even Socialistic (consider the brilliant paraphrase in *The Perfect Wagnerite*). He would certainly have shared Wagner's objection to the third *Leonora* overture of Beethoven, which "introduces an actual stage effect in the middle-section, repeating the first section of the tone-piece, with the customary change of key, exactly as in a symphonic movement, heedless that the dramatic excitement of the middle-section, reserved for thematic working-out, has already led us to expect the *dénouement*."

Shaw, because his idea of music was not "absolutist," attacked Brahms. He expected a

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composition to invite extra-musical imputations —not forgetting, of course, that the music as such should be good and self-subsistent to begin with. He had no patience with Brahms' thoroughly-composed (*durchkomponiert*) "developments." And how right he was on this point! But his dislike of any hint of academic exploitation of "form" led him astray with, of all music, the *Quintet* of Schubert:

> Schubert's string *Quintet in C*, beautiful though the themes are, is decidedly too long. The composer fell into the error—an habitual one with him—of developing the principal movements at a length quite disproportionate to his resources in variety of form, hence the effect of the quintet as a whole is wearisome.

This heresy was published in February, 1877—and is it ALL heresy?

MR. LAURENCE has garnered from Shaw's nonage to his nonagenarian period. He naturally has not failed to preserve Shaw's share of the argument in the *Nation* of 1910 with Ernest Newman, a dazzling dialectical bout, a draw "on points." There was no knock-out. He has also preserved the brilliant messages from Bayreuth. As far back as 1889, Shaw was arguing for new productions of Wagner. "The powerful, magnetic personality, with all the tension it maintained, is gone; and no manipulation of the dead hand can ever produce the living truth. . . . At Bayreuth, where the Master's widow sits in the wings as the jealous guardian of the traditions of his own personal direction, there is already a perceptible numbness—the symptom of paralysis. . . ."

He had no doubt about Elgar. "Elgar, neither an imitator nor a voluptuary, went his own way without bothering to invent a new language; and by sheer personal originality produced symphonies that are really symphonies in the Beethoven sense, a feat in which neither Schumann, Mendelssohn, nor Brahms, often as they tried, ever succeeded convincingly."

Here we have the over-emphasis of the debater. But Shaw was probably right in his view that the first-rate creative geniuses don't consciously "invent" a new language but say their say in terms of known tone significances—in tones and rhythms, that is to say, which have acquired in time associative or symbolic values. Mostly it is the second-raters who are the "innovators," who naturally enough, stimulate by their technical experiments the curiosity of a public not particularly experienced in emotion or æsthetics.

Shaw maintained that the first condition of music-criticism is "a matter of good journalism," and that it should be attractive to the general reader, musician, or non-musician. Though as a young man he sometimes exhibited his technical knowledge profusely, in his maturity he seldom wrote a line confusing to average cultivated men and women who didn't know the difference between a triad and a triangle. In this respect he was like Ernest Newman, who could go deep into a composer without need of exclusive musicians' terminology. Only the second-rate music-critic, lacking æsthetic experience and the first-class writer's vocabulary, is obliged to fall back on stuff such as "the descending and sequential octave-figure falls now on the third and other accented bars"—superfluous to the musician, because he can find this sort of thing for himself, and unintelligible to the layman, who might be T. S. Eliot or any Jack or Robert Robinson.

Shaw certainly "knew" very much about music, even if he didn't listen to it with the ears of, say, a Schubert. He lent to music the ear of his intellect, not always to his disadvantage as a critic. Mr. Laurence has made a refreshing book from material too good, too stimulating, too wonderfully well-informed ever to have been left buried, almost without hope of resurrection, in the files.

Neville Cardus

Essays Presented to
Michael Polanyi
on his Seventieth Birthday

The Logic of Personal Knowledge

The essays follow in the main the outline of Polanyi's argument in *Personal Knowledge*, and may be read as bearing on some of the themes developed there. Contributors include Paul Ignotus, Arthur Koestler, C. V. Wedgwood, Bertrand de Jouvenel, Raymond Aron, D. M. Mackinnon, etc.
Royal 8vo, 40s.

Routledge & Kegan Paul

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LETTERS

"Chatterley and the Law"

BEFORE DEALING with a few of the points raised by my critics, may I thank Sir William Emrys Williams and others who wrote in a similarly friendly way?

Literary merit. Not having questioned the literary merit of *Lady Chatterley*, I feel no compulsion to take up Mr. Hoggart's challenge to name twenty better recent novels. Perhaps he had better put the question to some of his allies (notably Dame Rebecca West) who appear to think less highly of the work than I do. He might put it to himself, indeed, for he finds failure, weakness, and lack of balance where I find only strength and consistency —albeit of a detestable kind.

Puritanism. Mr. Hoggart again describes *Lady Chatterley* as "the work of a puritan." He gives no evidence. Why should he? The fact is "hardly in doubt," clinched for the "informed reader" by the endorsement of Mr. E. M. Forster. How furious Lawrence (vide *Obscenity and Pornography*) would have been at such glib misrepresentation! How furious any puritan! I repeat that the puritan tradition is a *Christian* tradition. Let Mr. Hoggart come out from behind Mr. Forster and refute that if he can. Fr. Jarrett-Kerr will doubtless lend a hand.

Witchcraft. Indeed I did not establish any connection between Lawrence and Aleister Crowley, and I fancy that Fr. Jarrett-Kerr would be hard-pressed to establish any connection between Crowley and witchcraft, unless he uses the word in a much looser sense than I do. Witchcraft and black magic are not the same thing, and I am sorry that the title of my article (for which I was not responsible) should have appeared to confuse them.

"A certain coldness of the flesh." I find Dame Rebecca West's letter the most confusing of all. If Lawrence was "right in recognising that there was something wrong in Germany, and that there was going to be a deadly revolution," he was certainly not alone in that. Of Lawrence's German contemporaries, Moeller van den Bruck and Stefan George both recognised these things and said so at length in terms and tones by no means dissimilar to those often used by Lawrence. So did Hitler. The question remains: whose side was Lawrence on? Where would he have found "instinct" and "a certain warmth of the flesh?" In the poor Jewish capitalist who was so cruelly beaten? Or in those thugs who, obedient to their instincts and to the warm promptings of their flesh, so cruelly beat him? Where? What did Lawrence care for "mercy and justice?" What for "intelligence?" As for "motiveless murders," a reference back to my article will indicate his attitude to *them*.

COLIN WELCH

London, S.W.15

I SHOULD LIKE TO congratulate your contributor Mr. Colin Welch for having written the only discussion of the *Lady Chatterley* case that I have seen which really gets to the heart of the matter. May I offer a few comments from the point of view of a Christian theologian?

The essential flaw in Lawrence's view of sex is that for him it took the place which Christianity assigns to God and that therefore his attitude was simply idolatrous. In a misty way this was I think realised by the Bishop of Woolwich when he said that Lawrence was trying to portray the sex relationship as something essentially sacred and as in a real sense an act of holy communion. It is sufficient to ask "communion with what?" to make the point clear; for the answer is certainly not "communion with God." As Mr. Welch says, what the book is really about is not love or marriage but the worship of the phallus. The book's ecclesiastical defenders have, I suggest, been led astray by their failure to recognise that it is not only the *attitude* that matters but also its *object*. It is precisely because the attitude is a religious one—an attitude whose only proper object is God himself—that its direction upon a creature is to be condemned as a violation of the First Commandment. Because it is an explicit substitution of something else for the only legitimate object of adoration, Lawrence's outlook does not represent a dim intuition of Christianity or a half-way house to it or even a step in the right direction, but a direct denial of it. Mr. Welch seems to have been the only person who has seen this. For the plain fact is that sex is just as sacred as, and no more sacred than, anything else that God has made.

E. L. MASCALL

Christ Church, Oxford

Bombs and Scapegoats

AS A possibly "average unilateralist" I find Mr. Marquand's picture of C.N.D. very different from mine. I am not "good;" and I do not imagine that most other people are "good." Most people conform and accept—though reminders about witch-burning suggest that what they conform to can be changed. Of course some supporters of the Campaign have reasons which appear to others mistaken, or even dishonest. But could Mr. Marquand explain where in our fairly extensive literature he found his "mythology of C.N.D."? The sources he cites, not to say parodies, are not ours; and their general agreement with us about the bomb cannot make us responsible for everything else they say.

The arguments with which Mr. Marquand finds it useless to confront us amount largely to the undoubted fact that nuclear weapons are not the only evil. The house is on fire, and we emotional do-gooders want to throw out the barrel of gunpowder from the kitchen. It is indeed useless to argue that the gunpowder did not cause the fire; that some of the furniture is better blown up anyway; that the petrol in the garage is dangerous

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too; that more gunpowder can always be made; and that the house will never be really safe until everything is fire-proofed. I suspect that one fundamental difference between Mr. Marquand and the C.N.D. is that he does not share our beliefs that an all-out nuclear war would be a worse disaster than anything else imaginable, and that there is great and immediate danger of its occurring. Could it be his emotions that make him refuse to face this possibility?

He seems to reject also our belief that Britain is in a position both of special danger and of special opportunity. To say so inevitably makes possible the glib retort about blowing our own trumpets and saving our own skins. C.N.D. could, and occasionally does, address its appeals to other countries too. But our main object must be to get a British government to contribute towards world-wide nuclear disarmament. As things are, most supporters of the Campaign—not all—think that the best hope of this is in a Labour government carrying out what is now Labour Party policy. This means a revolution in the conduct of foreign relations. For the first time our government would be doing, not merely saying, something not determined by the scoring of points in the power game. Such a revolution has now ceased to be an idealist's dream and come within the bounds of political reality. This too, it appears, Mr. Marquand cannot accept: he must fit us into the old political categories as Blimps or peasant nationalists. But we do not regard Britain as either a dominant or an oppressed nation: she is simply the first second-rank nuclear power. We do not protest against Polaris in order to denigrate the Americans, but because we think—rightly or wrongly—that Polaris increases the risk of war. We do not march against Nato, but against preparations for nuclear war by Nato as well as by anyone else. Evidently we do not put our motives clearly enough. We must keep on trying.

D. H. Pennington

Bramhall,
Cheshire

Your last issue contains a letter by me calling for "general controlled disarmament and the building up of U.N. authority," and this is immediately followed by a letter from Christopher Mayhew which calls my letter "unilateralist propaganda."

Well now!

Wayland Young

Bayswater,
London

About the C.N.D., Wayland Young states: "It is precisely what it says it is: the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament." More precisely, however, the C.N.D. stands for *unilateral* Nuclear Disarmament—and this is surely what all the fuss is about!

Silvan Jones

Bangor,
Wales

"The Public School"

In the February issue of Encounter John Pringle compared the Public Schools with the Chinese Communes, but he was writing of the successful Public Schools of yesterday, Cyril Connolly's Enemies of Promise; to-day their products could be more justly compared with the Emigrés of 1790, than with the Commune-ists of 1960. Like the shabby and romantic nobility gathered behind the Rhine they have not realised that the world for which they have been carefully reared has passed away, and that the new world has no place for them as they are. The Enemies of Promise have become the Friends of Failure.

Even to-day Generals still assure the cadets at the Annual Inspection that a Public School Education has prepared them for Leadership and Service, without realising how puzzling that theme is for some of their listeners. In the past, of course, the Public School did train leaders who perhaps after a spell at "the Shop," went out and joined their regiment and led their sepoys; and the system worked, for the atmosphere at the top of the Public School was perfectly reflected in the regimental mess and in all the upper reaches of the Services, whether they were military or civil. To-day, however, "the Shop" no longer exists, and if the Public School trainee manager does a spell in the shop, it will be on the floor among noisy machines and joking men; these are the people he has been trained to lead, but the charm does not work and there are no Queen's Regulations to fall back on. He quickly discovers then that a training for leadership is very far from being a training for management. As for the idea of Service, about which he had heard so much at school, and which until twenty-five years ago had rung out so clearly and even gloriously when it was attached to the Sudan Civil, the I.C.S., or the Imperial Service College, this suddenly seems to tarnish and the word itself to lose its bell-like quality when it is merely attached to National Health or Youth.

It would be quite wrong to suppose that the Public Schools have not changed with the times; they have changed and in many ways for the better. The stupid and insensitive discipline which used to be associated with them has been modified; in many schools fagging has been abolished or is on the way out; and the same is true of beating, especially as far as beating by senior boys is concerned. Games are no longer the all-absorbing interest which they once were, and no longer therefore are they the sole status symbols. The arts have been allowed to infiltrate many schools and no longer is it necessarily considered cissy to be interested in painting or music. The Public Schools have therefore become much more relaxed and educationally valuable communities. At the same time the curriculum has been brought up to date, influenced powerfully by Industry. Just as in the past, pious benefactors provided chapels and libraries, in the 1950s Industrialists endowed laboratories, and as a result it became easier to recruit good science staff and now the numbers on the Science sides in H.M.C. schools are greater than

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those on the Arts sides. Recruitment of Public Schoolboys by Industry is looked after by the Public School Appointments bureau, and their further education at Oxbridge is encouraged through the myriad Industrial Scholarships which do not have the disadvantage of State Scholarships, in that no means test is applied to the holders.

WITH ALL THESE REFURBISHINGS, and with the re-routing of Old Boys from the road which led to the Officers' Mess to the one which leads to the Managers' Dining Room, it might be thought that John Pringle's thesis had been borne out, and that, almost by accident, the Public Schools have lurched successfully through the crisis which they faced in the forties, and are now prepared to provide England with its Top People for the next century. But inside the Public Schools there is a recognition that all is not well; among the more intelligent senior boys there is often an irritating feeling that they are being confined and cribbed beyond maturity, and among those of the masters who go as far as analysing the situation, a suspicion that in spite of modernisation their boys, like the Emigrés of 1790, have been trained for the wrong century.

This arises from the two inescapable facets of the Public School System: boarding and fee-paying; the main effect of these twin necessities (for without them the Public Schools would lose their character) is to persuade their products that they are separate and therefore superior to anyone who has not been to a Public School. The process by which this is achieved is often unconscious but it is unavoidable. It was useful and effective when the boys were booked for the Guards or the I.C.S. or even Father's Business; it gave them a feeling of self-confidence which made it possible for them to act with that effortless superiority which has always infuriated aspiring men who had not got it. To-day, however, it simply will not do. That induced self-confidence which a Public School education still gives to a boy (and for which many parents are happy to pay their fees), is to-day being undermined. To be effective it needs to be based on more than an inherited conviction of separateness and superiority, for if it is not, it will not long withstand the buffetings of a works committee or a delegation of shop stewards; at the same time complacency which is often born of this ill-founded self-confidence will have to be pricked and burst, if the whole British economy is not going to be allowed to flounder in a self-satisfied slough of chauvinist un-enterprise.

Who can take the place of these "born leaders;" and can we do without them? To answer the second point first: across the Channel they manage without them, and "the Six" are not doing too badly. And as for replacing them, there are plenty of former day-boys who come from anonymous schools; there are in fact twice as many boys being educated in the Sixth Forms of day-schools as there are in boarding-schools, while in the Universities the former boarding-school boy is heavily outnumbered. For the world of to-morrow the day-school experience gives a boy a view of the world, a view of politics and family life based on a normal-spent youth, and not seen out of perspective from the top of a specially built platform. His loyalties are not limited to his school, to his class, or to the parts of the world painted red in old atlases; he is prepared to go to Europe for more than winter sports; but he may go there for new ideas about railway electrification, about computor regulated production, and new tax systems, and he won't be too proud to borrow ideas from anywhere abroad; and he has self-confidence. But his self-confidence is not based on his right to wear a certain tie and his ability to recognise others, but upon the fact that he can do a job efficiently, that he can get people to work with him; and he will not need to worry too much about where his children will go to school because they will live at home.

HARRY RÉE
Headmaster
Watford Grammar School, Hertfordshire

"Mr. Berenson's Values"

IT WAS RATHER inconsiderate of Freya Stark, having characterised Death as a lion and Professor Schapiro as a hyena, to leave us wondering whether she identifies Berenson with the water-buck, the antelope, the gazelle, the zebra, or the wildebeeste. And it was very inconsiderate indeed of you to publish her letter. Inconsiderate not so much to your eminent contributor as to Miss Stark, in allowing her to make an ass of herself in maligning his motives.

DAVID SYLVESTER
London

Boris Pasternak

DURING the last years of his life, much of the creative energy of my brother, Boris Pasternak, went into his correspondence. His nearest relatives in Moscow and in England are anxious to collect any letters he may have written, with a view to eventual publication; I would therefore be glad if anyone who has letters from him would let me have careful copies or photostats of them.

LYDIA PASTERNAK SLATER
20 Park Town, Oxford, England

Zen

I WISH to congratulate Mr. Arthur Koestler on his excellent exposé of Zen Buddhism. And I would like to note here that Zen was discarded in China and Korea during the 8th century, simply because of the fanaticism it gave rise to. The Military class in Japan, however, found the perfect use of Zen by making it the religion of the Samurai. The Samurai is now a picturesque figure of legend; but at the time of his existence he was a hired killer. Zen had thus gone to the complete extreme away from Buddhism, which as its most basic rule forbids the shedding of blood.

Of course Christianity too has gone to that extreme many times in history: the Inquisition, the fanatic Puritans, the Flagellants. First stones are still being cast by hands that are used to fumbling absently with a cross.

PETER HYUN
Paris

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AUTHORS

Cyril Connolly is one of the best-known English literary critics. His *Enemies of Promise* (1938) contained some of the most acute remarks ever made about the pre-war English literary scene as well as a lurid picture of the English public school system. He has also published a novel, *The Rock Pool* (1935), and a number of collections of essays. His writing is best described as "mandarin," and he himself would hardly disown a term of his own invention. . . . **Herbert Gold** is a young American writer whose reputation stands high in his own country, but who so far has attracted little attention in Europe. He has published both novels and short stories. A collection of the latter, *Love and Like*, has just been published by Deutsch. . . . **C. M. Woodhouse** has had a long and varied experience of international affairs which has included command of the Allied Military Mission to the Greek guerrilla movements during the war, being attached to a number of British diplomatic missions since it, and also being the Director-General of Chatham House from 1955 to 1959, when he became a Conservative M.P. . . . **P. M. S. Blackett** is Professor of Physics in the Imperial College of Science and Technology at London University. His publications on the political implications of nuclear weapons include *The Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy* (1948) and *Atomic Weapons and East-West Relationships* (1956). . . . **Neville Cardus** is well known for his music criticism in the *Guardian* and also for his writing on cricket, though his recreations have been described by himself as "anything not in the form of a game or sport." . . . **George Lichtheim** is a well-known scholar and writer living in London. A book by him entitled *Marxism: A Historical and Critical Study*, will shortly be published by Routledge.

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WISE BEFORE THE EVENT

JOSEPH ALSOP, the well-known Washington columnist, recently wrote to us that "anyone who wants to follow the mysterious movement of ideas in the modern world is forced to read ENCOUNTER . . ." That this is not just one man's opinion is borne out by the fact that in recent years our subscription list has quadrupled, in addition to greatly increased bookstall sales. In fact, we can now claim, without much risk of contradiction, that ENCOUNTER has the largest readership of any English-language monthly of its type in the world.

One result of this rapid growth of circulation has been the difficulty of estimating our print orders. On several occasions recently an issue has sold out within a week or two of publication. We hate to disappoint would-be readers, but with printing costs as they are we cannot afford to print in excess of our reasonable expectations. This is why we say—*please* place a regular order with your newsagent or take out a subscription (details on page 1). And please renew your subscription immediately on expiry. This will ensure that you receive ENCOUNTER every month—before it becomes a collector's item.

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JAMES PURDY

Malcolm

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